

JUST HIS LUCK



OLIVER

OPTIC


Church
250

Brandeis University

Waltham, Massachusetts

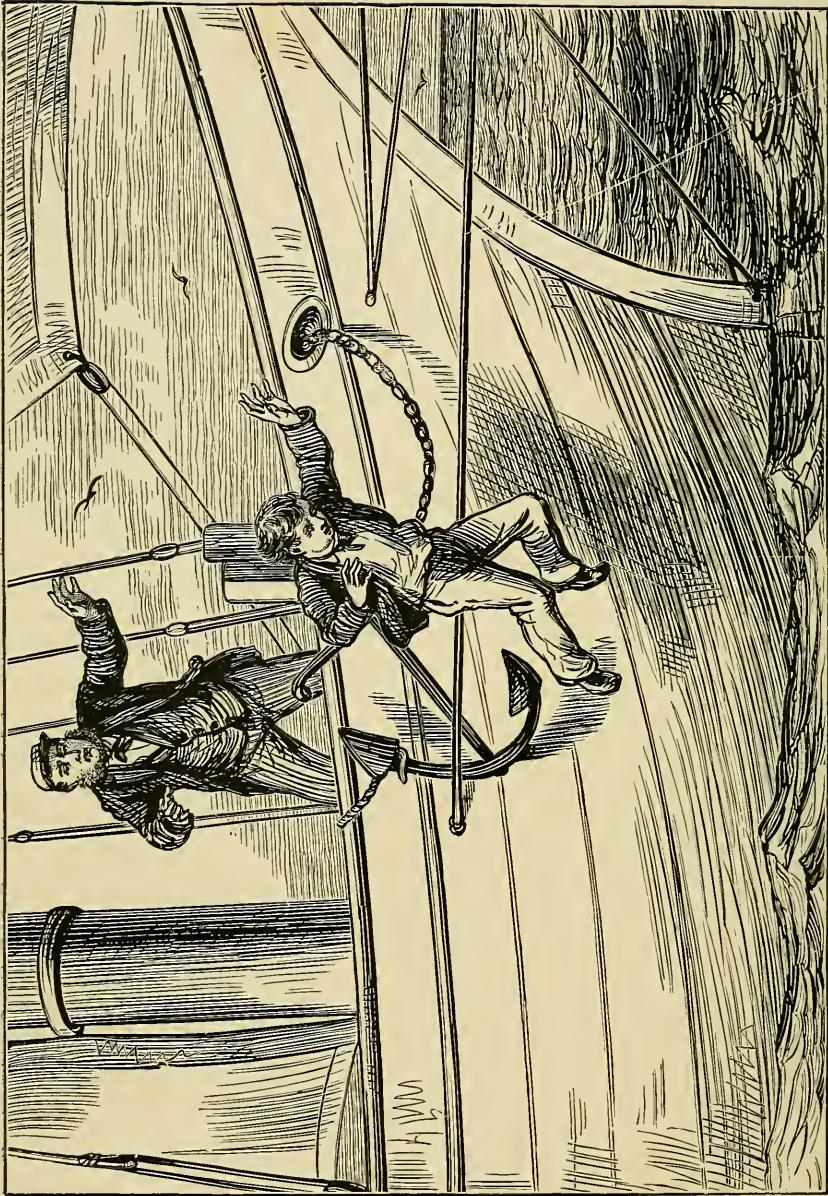


THE GIFT OF
EDWARD LEBLANC



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WHEN WADE SAW HE COULD NOT ESCAPE, HE LEAPED UPON THE RAIL, AND THEN
JUMPED OVERBOARD. — Page 220.

JUST HIS LUCK

BY

OLIVER OPTIC

BOSTON

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JUST HIS LUCK

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JUST HIS LUCK.

CHAPTER I.

PEACHES AND A HORSEWHIP.

“**T**HERE are some peaches worth eating,” said Lon Trustleton to his two companions, as they passed an orchard of this delicious fruit on the river road, as it was called.

“Them’s tip-top,” added Matthew Swikes: “I go for havin’ some on ’em.”

“So I say,” replied Lon; and he leaped over the fence, followed by Matt. “Come along, Wade.”

“No: I’m not going to steal anybody’s peaches,” answered Wade Brooks.

“Oh, come along!” called Lon, the son of the rich Captain Trustleton, who lived on the hill near the village of Midhampton.

“No: I won’t have any thing to do with the scrape. Besides, I have to go on an errand to the village,” said Wade.

“See here, Wade Brooks, if you don’t come over

here, I'll break your skull," continued Lon Trustleton, shaking his head to emphasize his words.

"What for? for not stealing peaches?" added Wade, with a smile at the absurdity of the idea.

"You want to set up for a goody; and when any thing is said about hooking peaches, you blow on Matt and me, that's the way of it; and if you don't come over here I'll go over there — that's all."

Matt Swikes was already shaking a tree filled with peaches, which were even more tempting to Wade than to his companions; for he was a friendless boy, whom no one fed with nice peaches. As the fruit was fully ripe, a great quantity came down when Matt shook the tree. He and Lon filled their pockets, and returned to the road as quickly as possible; for the consequences of stealing peaches were not always pleasant, though stolen fruit may be the sweetest.

The first thing that Lon did when he was in the road was to bat Wade Brooks over the head, as he had promised to do.

"What are you about, Lon?" demanded Wade Brooks, as he dodged the blow.

"I told you I'd do it, and I will," replied Lon, following up his victim, who tried to escape from him; but in the end he received several heavy blows.

"What's that for, I should like to know?" said the victim, when his persecutor seemed to be fully satisfied with the punishment he had inflicted.

"I told you what it was for, while I was in the orchard. Now, if you ever say a word about this thing, I'll give you a broken head that will last you longer than this one will. I don't want any fellow canting where I am."

"I didn't meddle with you," replied Wade, who thought it a very hard case to be pounded for not stealing peaches. "If you want to steal peaches, that is your affair, and not mine."

"If you say any thing more about stealing, I'll give you another dose now. Can't a fellow help himself to a few peaches without it's being called stealing?" demanded Lon, with a look of injured innocence.

Wade Brooks did not think it was worth while to discuss the matter any more in just that manner, and he was silent. He walked behind his two companions, and wished they had been half a mile or more from him. He was a nobody, and Lon was the son of a rich man, even Matt Swikes, though only the son of a poor farmer, was a good deal better off than he was, though they both lived under the same roof.

As the party approached the house of Mr. Garlick, who owned the peach-orchard they had entered, they found its occupant in the road, with a horsewhip in his hand. By his side stood his two hired men; and on the grass near him lay a large dog which had a very bad reputation and very sharp teeth.

"I think we had better be moving in some other direction," suggested Matt Swikes, when he saw the array of force before them.

He halted as he spoke, and Lon did the same. Wade, who was innocent, continued on his way till he came up with Mr. Garlick, who, without any ceremony, gave him several hard cuts on the legs, and each one of the blows seemed to the victim to take the skin off.

“I’ll teach you to steal my peaches,” said the exasperated farmer.

“I did not touch your peaches: I did not get into the field,” pleaded Wade, who thought it was even harder to be whipped for stealing the peaches than it had been to be pounded for not stealing them.

The farmer hit him several times more before Wade got out of the way; or, rather, till the attention of the persecutor was called to the other two. Lon and Matt were disposed to make their escape by jumping over the fence, and retreating in another direction.

“Stop, there! if you try to run away, I’ll send my dog after you!” shouted Mr. Garlick.

The dog was more dangerous than the man: indeed, he was so fierce that he was kept chained in the day-time, or Lon would not have dared to enter the orchard. The brute had no discretion in the use of his teeth, and had never read the law of the State relating to assaults. The farmer would be careful in the use of the whip; and Lon did not believe Garlick would dare to strike the son of Captain Trustleton. He put a bold face on the matter, and continued his walk towards his father’s house, which was on the same road.

But Lon under-rated the pluck of the farmer ; for, as soon as the boy was within his reach, he hit him the hardest cut he could administer with the whip ; and, not satisfied with this, he gave him half a dozen more. The two hired men had placed themselves behind the boys in the road, so that they could not retreat ; and the farmer thrashed them to his heart's content.

“ Let me alone ! ” yelled Lon, and the whip cut his soul as much as the skin of his legs.

“ I'll teach you to steal my peaches, you young villains ! ” roared the farmer.

“ My father will give it to you for this ! ” cried Lon, smarting under the pain.

Then Mr. Garlick rested Lon by giving it to Matt.

“ Let me alone, ” groaned Matt, writhing under the torture. “ I did not touch your peaches. It was the fellow that has gone ahead.”

That was the sort of a fellow Matt Swikes was ; and a little more of the whip would do him no harm.

“ I tell you it was the fellow that has gone ahead, ” repeated Lon, when Garlick spelled Matt by turning his attention to the rich man's son. “ It was Wade Brooks that stole the peaches.”

“ I saw two of them in the orchard ; but I don't know which they were, ” said one of the hired men.

“ They have got peaches in their pockets now, ” said the other hired man.

“ Take hold of them, and empty their pockets, ” said Mr. Garlick angrily.

The hired men were stout fellows, and they rather enjoyed the job. They took the peaches from the pockets of the culprits, and laid them on the grass as carefully as though they had been little babies; for the fruit was of the choicest kind on the farm of the owner.

“That proves that you did steal peaches; and my man saw you take them,” said Mr. Garlick, out of breath with excitement. “Here, Jacob, run after that other fellow, and see if he has got any in his pockets.”

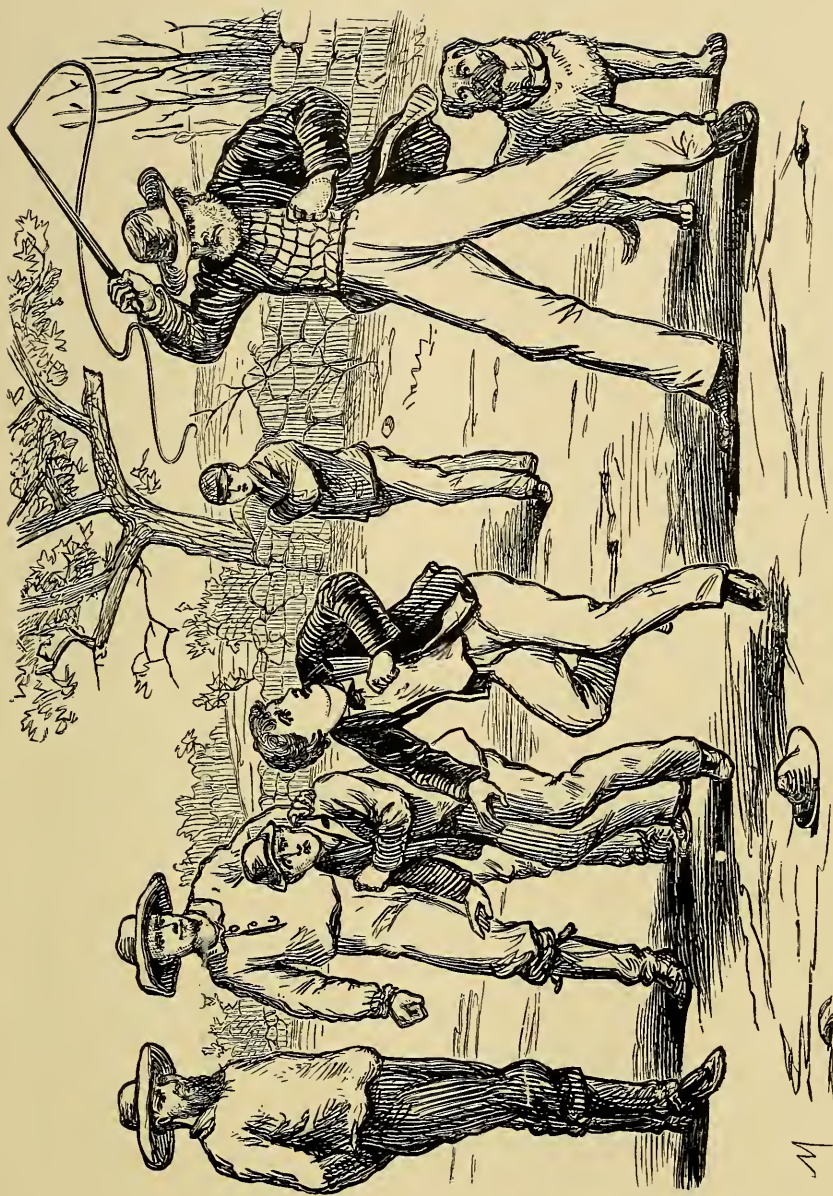
The man obeyed the order. Wade Brooks had not gone far; for he had halted at a safe distance from the scene to witness, if not to enjoy, the castigation of his tyrants. He was near enough to hear what was said, for the farmer spoke as though all the listeners were as deaf as posts.

“Come, youngster, give up your peaches,” said Jacob, when he came to the place where Wade had halted.

“I haven’t any peaches: I haven’t touched a peach this year,” pleaded Wade. “You will not find any about me; and I did not go into the orchard, and Lon Trustleton licked me because I wouldn’t.”

“I must see for myself,” answered Jacob; and he did see for himself that the boy spoke the truth.

“No peaches here; but you had better come up here, and tell the old man about it yourself. You do not look like one of the boys I saw in the peach-orchard.”



"I'LL TEACH YOU TO STEAL MY PEACHES, YOU YOUNG VILLAINS!" — Page 11.

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“I was not one of them : I wouldn’t steal peaches,” pleaded Wade ; and he felt as though his legs would not have smarted any more if he had stolen them ; and being honest was very poor consolation at this time. As he approached the place where farmer Garlick was meeting out justice, he saw the judge give Lon and Matt another dose of the horsewhip ; and he came to the conclusion that he had got off easy, compared with his more guilty companions.

Jacob reported that he had found no peaches in the pockets of Wade Brooks, and that he thought he was not one of the boys he had seen in the peach-orchard.

“He is the only one of us that did go into the orchard,” said Lon, uttering another abominable lie.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the farmer gave him half a dozen cuts with the whip. Lon was so mad, that he swore like a young pirate : his father used profane language, and why shouldn’t he ?

“Don’t tell me any more lies, you villain !” roared farmer Garlick. “Don’t tell me that this boy stole all the peaches, when I find he has none in his pockets, and yours are full of them.”

“He asked us to keep them for him,” answered Matt, wishing to back up his friend ; but the farmer gave him another dose for the lie he invented.

“My boy, I am sorry I struck you with the whip ; for I believe you did not go into the orchard,” said

the farmer, turning to Wade. — “Give him three of the handsomest peaches of the lot.”

“Lon Trustleton licked him because he would not go into the orchard,” said Jacob, as he gave Wade the fruit.

“And he’ll do it again as soon as he gets a chance,” said Wade.

“That’s so,” added Lon; and the remark cost him half a dozen cuts on the legs.

“Now, Wade Brooks, you go along, and I will keep these fellows here till you are out of sight,” said the farmer.

Wade went his way; and, when he was out of sight, Garlick told the thieves he had done with them till they stole some more of his fruit. It was no use for him to go to law to save his property, and he should look out for it himself.

“You have not heard the last of this,” growled Lon, shaking his head in his wrath. “I will get even with you in some way. This will cost you more than all the peaches you will raise this year.”

“It has given me some satisfaction, at any rate, whatever it may cost me. I want you to understand that a rich man’s son can’t rob me of my property without something being done.”

The culprits departed as fast as their smarting legs would permit.

CHAPTER II.

SUPPERLESS TO BED.

WADE BROOKS had no long history to be related. He was an orphan, but not a foundling or any thing of that sort; and there is no chance of his turning out to be the son of an English baronet or of an American nabob. He was just what he seemed to be. His father had died a miserable sot, six months before the peach-orchard was invaded, and was buried at the expense of the town. Only a year before that event, his mother had passed away, the victim of a hard lot. But she had not lived in vain; for she was a good woman, and had left many good principles in the mind of her son and only child. No stone marked her resting-place in the churchyard, but her memory was preserved in the heart of her boy.

Midhampton consisted of a considerable village, with a large farming territory. Not a few wealthy men who had made fortunes in the city had homes within its limits, for it was not more than sixty miles from New York City. On the river road were the residences of several such; though, after the highway passed the hill, it was bordered by no more handsome

houses. The next dwelling was that of Philip Garllick, a decided man, who believed that his own property belonged to him. The next house was that of Obed Swikes, the father of Matthew Swikes. Matt was a bad boy; but he came honestly by the evil in his nature, for his father was the meanest man, by all odds, in the town of Midhampton.

Just beyond Swikes's house, which was an old, black, and rickety mansion, was the brook, by the side of which ran a lane down to the river. At its mouth the little river widened out into quite a bay, at the head of which were the ruins of the cabin in which Wade's father had lived and died. It had been set on fire by some bad boys, it was thought, and had burned to the ground. It was owned by Obed Swikes, who had not been able to find another tenant for the shanty in this out-of-the-way place.

Wade's father had been a loafer: he had spent all his time wandering about the country on foot or in his boat, gunning and fishing for his living. In this way he made a scanty living, for, when he sold the product of his trips, he spent most of the money for liquor; and Wade often had to pick up his own food after his mother died. The old sail-boat which the sportsman used was still at the creek, as the place was called. Anybody used it who wished to do so. It had been a good boat in its day, and had a cuddy forward where the fisherman had often slept in his wanderings.

After the death of Wade's father, Obed Swikes

had taken the boy into his own family. The orphan was twelve years old; and Swikes kept him at work so that he more than paid his keeping, for the keeping was about as mean as ever a boy knew. Wade lodged in the garret; and, as the house was badly out of repair, he was hardly sheltered from the weather. In the winter he often slept in a snow-bank; and, as his clothing was very meagre, he suffered a great deal from the cold.

After Wade parted with his companions, he went to the village to do his errand. He hurried home, so as to make up the time he had lost in the peach scrape. He took care to eat the three peaches before he went into the village, for he knew that Lon and Matt would take them away from him if they found them in his possession. They were going to the village, and he might expect to meet them there.

“Where on airth have you been all this time, Wade Brooks?” demanded Mrs. Swikes, as he entered the house on his return. “You’ve been gone over an hour.”

“I couldn’t get back any sooner,” pleaded Wade; and, as the distance to the village was two miles, he had made the four miles in very good time, considering the time of which the bad boys had robbed him.

“Yes, you could! you’ve been stopping on the way,” continued the old woman. “I’ve a great mind to give you a hiding for your laziness. We have to board and clothe you, and you don’t airn your salt.

You belong in the poorhouse; and, if you don't do better, we shall have to send you there."

But this was only a specimen of the abuse to which the boy was subjected every day of his life; and, with poor food and little clothing, he was almost disgusted with his efforts to get along in the world. If Obed Swikes's tongue was not as cutting as that of his wife, he made it up by putting heavy burdens on the boy. He called him from his bed at daylight in the morning, and kept him at work till into the night on the farm and about the barn.

When he had done his errand, he was set to work without any delay, at digging early potatoes in the garden, which Swikes was to take to the village to sell in the morning. He worked till dark, and then he was called to supper. He went into the house hungry as every growing boy is, and seated himself at the table. The family, consisting of five persons, had taken the meal an hour before; but Wade was required to work as long as he could see.

Wade's supper was a bowl of milk and a plate of brown bread,—very good if there had only been enough of it, and if it had not been his diet every night in the week. The boy did not complain of his food, for he had often seen the time when he could not get even this.

"Have you seen any thing of Matthew?" asked Mrs. Swikes, as Wade seated himself at table.

"Yes, marm: I saw him and Lon Trustleton as I was going over to the village," replied the weary

boy; but he was careful not to say any thing more. He knew it would cost him a pounding if he told the whole truth.

“He hain’t been home to his supper yet,” added Mrs. Swikes. “Do you know where he is, Wade?”

“No, marm. He didn’t tell me where he was going,” answered Wade.

But at this moment Matt came into the kitchen to speak for himself. He was limping, and seemed to be very sore, as well he might be after such a castigation as he had received.

“Where have you been, Matthew?” asked his mother, as the stealer of peaches dragged himself into the room. “What ails you? What makes you limp and squirm so?”

Matthew was the only boy of the family: the other children were all girls; and, for this reason, his parents thought more of him than of all the others, and did their best to spoil him, and succeeded remarkably well. Mrs. Swikes was anxious when she saw that something ailed her son; and her tones were quite tender, compared with those she had used to Wade.

“Garlick has been licking me with a horsewhip,” moaned Matt, bursting into tears, and breaking down completely in the presence of his mother.

“Lickin’ you! What on airth did he do that for?” demanded the indignant mother.

“He said I stole his peaches,” sobbed Matt; “but I didn’t. It was Wade Brooks that stole ’em, and laid it to Lon and me.”

Without waiting to investigate this statement, Mrs. Swikes, who was a great raw-boned woman, — her husband had married her because he thought she would be able to do a good deal of work, — seized poor Wade, and dragged him from his chair at the table, upsetting his bowl of milk, and pitched him on the floor. The boy was an infant in her grasp, and he did not offer any resistance. The Amazon gazed at her prostrate victim, while her eyes glowed with hate and rage; then, resorting to a masculine accomplishment, she savagely kicked him in the ribs.

“I didn’t steal any peaches,” pleaded Wade, as dumbly as the case seemed to require: “I didn’t touch one of them.”

“Yes, he did, mother. He told Garlick we did it; and Garlick give him three peaches for telling,” howled Matt, still blubbering like a baby.

“Mr. Garlick did give me three peaches, but it was because he licked me when I did not deserve it,” pleaded Wade. “You can ask Mr. Garlick, and he will tell you the same thing.”

“Ketch me asking Garlick any thing about it!” exclaimed Mrs. Swikes furiously. “I’ll take it out of his hide for licking my boy.”

Wade was entirely willing she should do this, if she did not take it out of his own hide, which she was more likely to do.

“He licked Lon Trustleton too; and, if you ask him, he will tell you just what I say,” whined Matt.

Mrs. Swikes seized a green-hide, which was her husband's wagon-whip, and began to belabor poor Wade with it. It was a terrible instrument of torture when applied to a boy's skin, covered only with a pair of thin overalls. The boy did not cry out with the pain, for he had found that it did no good, and, the more he screamed, the worse he got it; but he could not endure the blows, and he made a spring for the open door. Mrs. Swikes followed him, and attempted to catch him; but, goaded by the instinct of self-preservation, he succeeded in getting out of the way.

"Stop, you rascal!" shouted the Amazon. "Do you mean to run away from me? I'll give you a double dose for this."

"What's the matter now?" demanded Mr. Swikes, coming in from the barn at this point in the difficulty.

The angry woman told him what the matter was; and Wade rested while she was doing so. He did not think it was prudent to run away. He felt that Mrs. Swikes's promise would be redeemed, and he wished to make the penalty as light as possible. The father was as indignant as the mother had been at the punishment bestowed upon the only male hope of that old black house; but he was sometimes more reasonable than his wife. In a low tone he told her she must not lick the boy with a green-hide: they might have her up before the court for cruelty, as had been the case with Ethan Small. He would

punish the boy. Possibly he had a suspicion that Wade told the truth, and Matt the lies. But Wade had been whipped enough, even if the charge against him was true; and he escaped any further beating, though he was sent to bed without his supper.

Matt ate his supper, which was a better meal than that provided for the boy of all work, and he went to bed with a full stomach. The young villain was not half so badly damaged as he pretended to be. His legs did smart in the first of it, but he got over this before he reached his father's house.

But Wade's complaining stomach did not allow him to sleep. He lay till he thought the family were all asleep; and then he left his garret, and crept down the stairs, which landed in the back room. All the family slept on the first floor, and Wade paused at the foot of the stairs to ascertain if any one was stirring. It was very dark in the back room, but he heard sounds as of some one creeping across the room. He retreated up two steps, and then saw the back door opened. By the light it let in, he saw Matt go out, and close the door.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE NIGHT.

FOR a moment, Wade forgot that he was hungry. Matt was up to something. He moved as though he was not very lame. Wade opened the door, and looked to see which way the young rascal went. He saw him take the river road towards the village. Then Wade made his way to the pantry, where he found plenty of brown bread, but no butter or any thing else that was eatable; for Mrs. Swikes did not leave white bread (when there was any in the house) and pies where they could tempt the boy of all work. She thought he might be wicked enough to help himself.

When he had secured all he wanted, he put out the match he had lighted, and was about to bear his plunder to the garret where he could appease his hunger without danger, when he heard the door of Mr. Swikes's chamber opened. It was next to the kitchen. Poor Wade felt that he was in a scrape. Taking a few pieces of black bread was a high crime for him to commit in that house. The pantry was large, and he crawled behind the door.

“I'm sure I heard some one in the kitchen,” said

Mrs. Swikes; and she was one of those who often insist upon finding a man in the house.

“I guess you was dreaming,” replied Mr. Swikes.

“No, I wasn’t: I heard the floor squeak as it does when any one treads on it,” persisted the woman. “You’ve got two hundred dollars of money hid in that closet, and it’s worth coming here arter.”

“But nobody knows I’ve got it.”

“Strike a light, and see if it is safe,” continued Mrs. Swikes in the chamber.

The farmer did light a candle; and, through a crack of the pantry door, Wade saw him put his hand in the lower left-hand corner of the closet over the fire-place.

“It’s all right,” said Mr. Swikes, when he had completed his examination: “I don’t believe there is anybody in the house that don’t belong here.”

With this he went to bed; but Wade heard them talking together for some time, and he dared not leave his hiding-place. He thought they would never go to sleep, after he had waited some time. The door leading to the cellar-stairs opened from this pantry, or “buttery” as Mrs. Swikes called it, and Wade saw that he might escape from his hiding-place in that way; but he was afraid to open the door while the old man and his wife were awake.

At last they ceased to talk, and Wade decided to make the attempt to reach his chamber in the garret. He crept like a mouse to the buttery door; but before he could come out he saw a form between himself

and a window, creeping into the kitchen from the back room. He could also see that the back door was left open. The figure was of about his own height, and he did not suspect that it was a ghost or any other bird of the night. He concluded at once that it was Matt Swikes returning from some mischief-making tour. He knew that Matt did such things, and he believed that he had burned the shanty by the creek.

Wade retreated to his former position behind the door of the pantry, thinking that Matt only intended to pass through the kitchen to his own room on the other side of the house. But the bad boy had other business in the kitchen. The door of the farmer's bedroom was closed, and Wade had heard him lock it when he shut it. Matt struck a match, which threw a little light on the subject. Wade watched him with intense interest, and saw him place a chair before the mantle-piece, and then get up into it. It was clear enough to the observer by this time, that the objective point of the bad boy was the closet in which the money was concealed.

Wade was filled with something like horror, as he saw Matt open the door of the closet; and he hoped the little villain's father would wake, and discover what he was about. He knew that Matt was a bad boy, but he had not supposed he was wicked enough to steal his father's money. He was on the point of interposing to prevent Matt from doing so bad a thing, but a noise in the farmer's chamber prevented

him from doing so. Besides, if he did so, Matt would lay it to him. But it was evident that the lady of the house had been disturbed again, for her voice could be heard in the bedroom. Matt took something from the closet, put it in his pocket, and then stepped down from the chair. He had put out his match, and Wade could see no more.

Matt was not a very cunning rogue, for he did not cover his tracks by removing the chair in which he had stood. As soon as he had obtained his booty, he retreated from the room by the back door. He could hardly have got out of the house before his father came from his chamber with a candle in his hand. Wade was by this time alarmed for his own safety. He might be found, and the crime of stealing the two hundred dollars laid to him. They certainly would do so if he was found out of his room at this time of night.

Farmer Swikes looked at the chair before the mantle-piece, and he knew that he did not leave it there. He stopped to think about the matter for a moment. That chair could not have been there when he put his hand in the closet before: if it had been, he would have fallen over it.

"I am sure I heard somebody in the kitchen," said Mrs. Swikes, in the bedroom.

"This chair wasn't here when I came out before," replied Mr. Swikes: "somebody has been here since I was."

"Is the money safe?" asked the woman; and to her this was the great question.

The farmer put the chair out of the way, and thrust his hand into the closet. He felt all about for the old wallet that contained the treasure. His heart came up into his throat when he missed it. He tried to think just where he had placed it; but the little cupboard was not more than six inches deep, and it could not have strayed very far. It was not there; it was certainly gone. Somebody had stood in that chair, and reached into the closet for the money.

“It is gone!” exclaimed farmer Swikes, as soon as he had satisfied himself of the fact.

“Gone!” repeated Mrs. Swikes. “Who on airth could have taken it?”

When she had partially dressed herself, she came out into the kitchen; and Wade saw on their faces an expression of utter despair. The boy of all work was satisfied that it would not be prudent for him to step out, and tell them their son was the thief. It would not be safe for him to do so, after the experience he had had that day.

“It would been safer to put the money in the bank,” groaned farmer Swikes.

“But who did it? It must be some one that knows about the house took it,” added Mrs. Swikes.

“I found that chair under the mantletry-piece,” said the farmer, as he pointed to the chair he had found directly under the closet.

“Then it must be somebody that couldn’t reach up to the closet without gittin’ into a chair,” added

the logical Mrs. Swikes. "It was some boy; and I shouldn't wonder if it was Wade Brooks. He's bad enough to do sich a thing. Run right up to the garret, Obed, and see if he is there; and, if he is, sarch his pockets, and look all about the bed," continued the woman, as she lighted another candle for her husband's use on this mission.

"Oh, dear!" groaned Wade, not audibly, but in spirit. "They'll find I'm not there, and it will be all up with me."

The farmer went up stairs, and his wife stepped into her chamber for something as soon as he was gone. Wade took advantage of this momentary uncovering of the position to open the cellar door; but he did not trouble himself to close it, for fear that the noise might betray him. He dared not go down the stairs; for, like every thing about the house, they were old and rickety, and they would certainly creak when they were expected not to do so. He was still in a position to hear what was said in the kitchen.

"He isn't there!" groaned Swikes, returning to the kitchen. "He's gone, and he may be half way to New York or some other place."

"I knew he done it!" exclaimed the female Swikes.

"He done it because you licked him so in the evening," groaned Swikes. "He's gone and done it now."

"But we shall ketch him yet, and get the money

back," replied Mrs. Swikes, who did not like to be considered as the cause of the loss.

"You'll never see nothin' more of that money," added Swikes, with a heavy sigh. "You might been a little easier with him, and let him had some supper."

"He didn't do it because he was licked, but because he is a bad boy," retorted Mrs. Swikes. "I told you I was afraid he was corruptin' our boy."

"He did it because he was licked with a greenhide; and boys won't allus stand every thing," replied Swikes petulantly.

"Well, Obed, what are you a-doin' on? while you stand here scoldin' me, that boy is gittin' away."

"What can I do?"

"Harness your horse, and drive down to the vilage: you may ketch him, or hear sunthin' on him."

"What's all that noise out doors?" said Swikes, as he went to the window, and threw it wide open. "The bells is ringin'; and I hear folks in the road yellin'."

"There is a fire, as sure as you live!" exclaimed Mrs. Swikes, going to the window. "I can see the light on't on the corn-house."

Swikes opened the door, and went out to the front of the house.

"It's Garlick's barn, as sure as you was born!" cried Mrs. Swikes. "Somebody set that barn afire: it didn't ketch without some help."

They passed out of Wade's hearing. He knew

they must go to the front of the house to see the barn which the woman said was on fire. They would not be likely to come in for a few minutes; and Wade came out of the cellar-way, and ran up to his room as fast as he could go, though he was careful not to make any unnecessary noise. In a moment he had gathered up all the clothes he had, consisting of a very indifferent suit he wore in the winter, and made haste to leave the house by the back door. He had not made up his mind what to do; but he made haste to leave that house.

When he got out doors, he was afraid to leave the shadow of the house, for the fire made it as light as day all around him. He got behind the corn-house, where he could see the blazing barn: it was burning with tremendous fury, and in a few minutes there would be nothing left of it. Wade Brooks could form some idea of the person or persons who set that fire: he thought he could see a little way into Matt Swikes's plans.

CHAPTER IV.

LODGINGS AFLOAT.

WADE BROOKS felt like an innocent boy ; and, being innocent, he was not willing to accept the penalty of guilt. He was to be a sort of sacrifice for the sins of Matt Swikes. Behind the corn-house he had time to think what he should do. He felt that he needed a friend. He wanted simple justice, which he could not get in the Swikes mansion. Then it came to him that Mr. Garlick, after he had whipped him for what he did not do, was sorry for his harshness, and had atoned for it by giving him three of the handsomest peaches he had ever seen.

Mr. Philip Garlick was a just man, if he had taken the law into his own hand. Wade was almost sure that Matt had something to do with burning that barn. He had left the house in the night after his father and mother had gone to bed. He had come back again, stolen the wallet from the closet, and then left again. The fire broke out a short time after he went out the second time. Perhaps Lon Trustleton was concerned with him in the wicked deed. If so, they

had burned the barn in revenge for the whipping they had received from Mr. Garlick.

Wade Brooks was willing to tell Mr. Garlick what he knew about the movements of Matt Swikes. He was certainly under no obligations to the Swikeses, and he knew that it was not right to cover up a crime. He would see Mr. Garlick in the morning, and tell him all he knew about the business. It was not likely that Matt would be anywhere near Midhampton in the morning, for it was plain to Wade that he had stolen the money from the closet to pay his expenses on a runaway trip.

In fifteen minutes the fire had consumed all the matter in the barn that would burn, and the light had subsided. Wade deemed it safe for him to retreat now, and he moved off in the rear of the house. A short walk brought him to the brook, which reminded him of the old sail-boat his father had owned. The cuddy would be a good place for him to pass the rest of the night, for there was some meadow hay in it for a bed. This was the best arrangement he could think of for the night, and he hastened to carry out the plan. When he reached the river road, which he was obliged to cross to get to the creek, he saw several vehicles approaching. He concluded that they were filled with persons who had been to the fire, and he concealed himself under some bushes till they had passed.

“The fire was set, you may depend upon it,” said a man in a wagon, as he passed the place where Wade was concealed.

“I heard that Garlick suspects it was done by Capt. Trustleton’s son and Swikes’s boy,” said another man in the wagon.

“I heard that; and also that Garlick had horse-whipped these boys for stealing his peaches,” added the first speaker.

The wagon passed on, and Wade heard no more that was said. The truth was coming out sooner than he expected. Though it was nothing but a suspicion, it had a correct foundation. He wondered what Swikes and his wife would say the next day when they heard the news. So far as Wade knew, Matt’s father and mother had not discovered his absence from the house. If his mother went to his chamber to tell him about the fire, and found he was not there, she would naturally suppose he had seen it, and gone to it.

Wade crossed the road as soon as the vehicles had all passed, and made his way to the sail-boat in the creek. He hauled her in, and went on board of her. For a boat so old, and which had been so much abused since the death of her owner, she was very dry and tight. The night was rather chilly, and Wade felt cold in his thin overalls. He dressed himself in the clothes he had brought from his chamber. Rolling up the garments he had taken off, he used the bundle for a pillow, and lay down on the bed of hay. It was not the first time he had slept in the boat; and, on the whole, he thought it was a better place than the garret he occupied.

He closed the door of the cuddy so as to keep out the night air, and fastened it on the inside, for the hook his father had put on the door for this purpose was still available. Wade had worked very hard all the day, to say nothing of the excitement he had passed through; and he was tired and sleepy. He had eaten the brown bread taken from the pantry while he was behind the corn-house; for he did not forget at any time before that he was hungry, or not for more than a few minutes at a time. He was therefore in good condition to go to sleep, and he did go to sleep as soon as he was comfortable in his bed of hay.

It was not more than ten o'clock in the evening when the fire broke out, and it was not after eleven when Wade went to sleep. He slept very soundly, as a weary boy should. If any one had pounded on the half-deck above his head, it would hardly have waked him. After the fire had burned out all the remnants of Mr. Garlick's barn, the people of Mid-hampton went to their homes; and not even a detail of firemen was left to watch the smouldering embers. No doubt the people of the town slept better after they returned to their beds.

While the fire was still burning, Capt. Trustleton walked over to the house of Obed Swikes. It was not till the worst of the fire was subsided, that he appeared; and Wade had gone to the creek.

"I suppose you have heard the bad news," said the captain to the Swikeses, whom he found still in

front of the old black house, watching the dying-out of the fire.

“No! what bad news?” demanded Swikes, with a start.

“Haven’t you heard any thing about it?” continued the retired shipmaster, in evident surprise.

“Heard about what? I don’t know what you are talking about,” replied Swikes.

“I supposed you must have heard it, for it is in everybody’s mouth, and it has come to me a dozen times since I came out of the house to see where the fire was,” added Capt. Trustleton, still giving no hint of the nature of the bad news.

“What’s in everybody’s mouth? I haven’t been any further from the house than this; and I hain’t heard a word about any thing,” said the puzzled farmer.

“What on airth is it, Capt. Trustleton?” asked Mrs. Swikes, whose curiosity had been roused to the highest pitch.

“It will come hard on you as it did on me when I first heard it,” added the captain, who did not seem to be very willing to tell the hard news, or at least to be the first to break it to the Swikeses. “It is said that your boy and mine are concerned in setting that barn on fire.”

“Good gracious!” exclaimed farmer Swikes.

“It’s a wicked lie!” protested Mrs. Swikes.

“I hope it is, marm; but I confess it looks rather bad for the boys,” replied Capt. Trustleton.

“I know it ain’t so!” repeated the woman. “My boy would no more do such a thing than he would cut his father’s throat. Now I think on’t, Matthew hasn’t been out of the house to-night. He was so tired that the noise didn’t wake him, and he has slept through the whole on’t.”

“Are you sure of it, Mrs. Swikes?” asked the captain with deep interest; for, if Matt was abed, it might be that his own boy was also innocent.

“Of course I’m sure on’t,” replied the mother of the hopeful son. “I haven’t seen nothin’ on him; and I know I should if he had been about.”

The heart of the captain sank within him as the hope died out of his heart.

“I think you had better look into his chamber, and see whether he is there,” suggested Capt. Trustleton.

“I’ll do it this minute; and you’ll find that Matthew hasn’t been out of the house,” said Mrs. Swikes confidently.

She led the way into the house by the front door, followed by her husband and the captain. Matt’s chamber opened out of the front entry; and his mother, after getting the candle in the kitchen, passed into the boy’s room. The solution was full of interest to the parents of both of the bad boys, and the two fathers followed the confident mother into the apartment of Matt.

The bed was empty. Capt. Trustleton had expected this result of the investigation. He was afraid the charge against the boys was true.

“I was never so astonished in all my life!” exclaimed Mrs. Swikes. “I was sure Matthew was in his bed. He is a very good boy, and I never knew him to do any thing wrong.”

If she spoke the truth, she was almost the only one in town who had never known Matt Swikes to do any thing wrong. But then, Matt was a spoiled child.

“I have had a talk with Garlick; and he says he horsewhipped my boy and yours for stealing his finest peaches,” said Capt. Trustleton. “He thinks they set his barn on fire to be revenged on him.”

“But Matthew said it was Wade Brooks that stole the peaches,” interposed Mrs. Swikes, “and then laid it to your boy and mine.”

“Garlick told me about that, It seems that Alonzo and Matthew laid it to Wade; but the peaches were found on your son and mine.”

“I declare. I don’t believe my boy would steal peaches, or any thing else,” persisted the mother of the hopeful son. “But we know that Wade Brooks will steal, for husband had two hundred dollars in the house, and he stole it this very night,” continued Matt’s mother.

“Wade stole it! Are you sure of that?” asked the captain.

“The money is gone, and so is Wade.”

“And so is Matthew,” added Capt. Trustleton.

You don’t mean to say that you think my son

stole the money?" demanded the mother of Matt indignantly.

"I think it more likely than that Wade Brooks stole it," replied the captain. "This is a bad scrape for the boys, and it may cost them some years in the penitentiary. I do not know that money will save them. If it will, it will cost us about a thousand dollars apiece."

Farmer Swikes groaned in anguish at the prospect.

"I am afraid the stealing of the money only shows that the boys are guilty, and intend to clear out to avoid the penalty of the crime. The money was stolen to pay the expenses of the journey. Perhaps I shall find that my boy has robbed me of some money. We had better look these things fairly in the face, and provide for the worst. I will see you again in the morning."

Capt. Trustleton departed for his elegant house; and he would have given the whole of it to have his son out of this scrape. The Swikeses had enough to keep them awake that night.

CHAPTER V.

HOW IT WAS DONE.

MRS. SWIKES hardly closed her eyes on the night of the fire ; and half a dozen times before morning she went to Matt's room to see whether he had returned or not. He was not seen again that night.

When Capt. Trustleton reached his magnificent house, he went to the chamber of Alonzo to see if he was there. The room was without its occupant, though it was eleven o'clock. The bed was not tumbled, and the son had not been into it. The captain was a widower ; so that there was no mother in this beautiful home to worry over the departure of a son, and to grieve over his error.

But where were Lon and Matt ? The son of the rich man had threatened Mr. Garlick, and declared that he would "get even with him." It now appeared that he had done so. Possibly Garlick believed by this time that it did not pay to protect his own property in just the way he had done it, though his barn and the stock it contained were fully insured. He had an idea that those boys would spend a long term in prison. He was not sure that the boys had set the fire, and perhaps he could not prove it ; but

he was very well satisfied in his own mind, and so were his two hired men.

Lon and Matt had agreed to meet near the house of the latter at nine o'clock in the evening. The Swikeses went to bed in summer as soon as it was dark, not only to save candles, but to be in condition to get up as soon as it was light in the morning. Matt had been punctual to the time; but Lon was half an hour late, for his father was in such a position that he could not get out of the house any sooner. They were ready to do the wicked job to which their smarting limbs still prompted them. But Lon was wise enough to look up the means of retreat before the battle was fought.

If they were seen in the vicinity of the burning barn, it would be evidence against them. The first blaze of light might betray them to Garlick and his hired men. Perhaps Lon was not a worse boy than his companion; but he had more genius for mischief, and more calculation in getting out of a scrape.

"It won't do for us to be seen anywhere near the barn when the blaze begins," said he, after they had talked it over in the cornfield near the doomed building.

"But we can't do any thing without being near it," reasoned Matt.

"We must get out of the way before the people come to the fire; and it won't do for us to show ourselves on the river road."

"How shall we get home, then?"

“I’ll tell you the best way to do it,” said Lon, who fathered all the bright thoughts. “I will go home, and make sure that my father sees me before I go to bed; and you will do the same with your folks. You live close by the barn; and you can get out of bed, come over here, and touch off the fire, and then get back to your room, without being seen.”

“And where will you be all the time I am doing this?” asked Matt; and the idea did not strike him as a very bright one.

“I shall be in my bed, sound asleep, so far as my father may know; and I shall not go out of the house, or know any thing about the fire, till to-morrow morning. Then I shall be very much surprised at breakfast-time when my father tells me that Garrylick’s barn has been burned in the night. I shall ask him what time it was, and all about it.”

“That’s all very nice for you,” replied Matt coldly, and without giving his friend much credit for his inventive genius.

“Don’t you think that’s a good plan?” asked Lon, with no little enthusiasm.

“First-rate for you, but not worth a straw for me,” answered Matt. “You are going to do nothing at all, and I am to do it all: you are going to bed, and I am to do the job.”

“But you live close by the barn, while I live half a mile from it. You can make the blaze without any risk; and if I am caught it will make it just as bad as for you.”

“I’m not going to do the thing all alone, and run all the risk. If that is the way you mean to manage it, we will give it up, and go home and go to bed.”

“I only mentioned that as one way.”

“It’s no way at all.”

“Very well, then I will stay with you. But what are we to do when the blaze breaks out?” asked Lon.

“We must get out of the way, I suppose,” added Matt vacantly.

“We must keep clear of the river road. I think we shall have to stay out all night; and then we shall be sure to be suspected.”

It was a hard problem to adjust, and Lon beat his brains till he hit on something that pleased him.

“If we only had some money, I should be in for going to New York. We could have a good time for two or three weeks; and by that time your father and mine could fix up the matter of burning the barn, if they lay it to us.”

“They will lay it to us if we clear out,” added Matt.

“But they can’t prove any thing: and I rather want Garlick to think we did the job,” added Lon, rubbing his sore legs; “but I don’t want him to be able to prove it.”

“I don’t believe he will be able to prove any thing, for the barn is a long way from his house; and I know his hired men do not live with him, but over in the village.”

“If we only had some money, I could fix it all in two seconds,” continued Lon. “If my father had any about the house, I would help myself.”

“Perhaps I can raise some,” suggested Matt, as he thought of the wallet concealed in the closet over the mantle-piece.

“If you can, we shall be all right.”

“You hold on here for three minutes, and I will see what I can do,” said Matt.

“How long will you be?” asked Lon.

“Not more than five or ten minutes.”

Matt returned to his father's house; and the events before related occurred while Wade Brooks was looking through the crack of the pantry door. Matt obtained possession of the wallet, and went back to the cornfield.

“Did you get it?” asked Lon.

I did.”

How much?”

“About two hundred dollars,” replied Matt; and we will do him the justice to say that he trembled all over, he was so agitated by the crime he had committed.

“Two hundred dollars!” exclaimed Lon. “That is a big haul.”

“If it's too much, I will carry part of it back; for my father will howl terribly when he finds it is all gone,” replied Matt.

“The more the better,” added Lon lightly. “Now we are in condition to do business. My father says

no one should ever attempt to do business without capital; and I shall heed his opinion."

Matt did not seem to feel that he was doing more than his share of the business; but then he had the honor of being a friend of the rich man's son, and that was something.

"Well, now tell us what you are going to do," said he with deep interest; so deep that for a time he forgot the crime he had already committed, in his desire to add another to it.

"There is no trouble about it now. We can manage it now as easy as you can fall off a wood-pile. Money makes the mare go; and we can reward old Phil Garlick for his kindness to us, without making anybody weep but himself," rattled Lon; in whose mind there was a vision of a "good time" in New York, with plenty of theatre, fun, and frolic.

"Well, why don't you tell how it is to be done?" said Matt impatiently.

"I will tell you all about it," answered Lon, who had no intention of bothering his companion, and had only delayed the explanation of his plans because his thoughts were running faster than his words. "In the first place, the barn is between the road and the river. As soon as we have got the things ready for the blaze, we will touch them off, and then make for the river; then we shall meet nobody to molest or make us afraid."

"That's good," added Matt approvingly.

"Of course it is; and there is no such thing as fail

about this plan. We will keep out of sight in the bushes by the river, till everybody in town has gone to sleep."

"Do you mean to stay in that hole till morning?" asked Matt, who did not like the idea.

"Not at all; only till the folks are gone. You see, it wouldn't do to move about while the people are looking at the fire, for we should be seen."

"But won't the engines come to the river for water?" suggested Matt.

"No: the pond at the foot of the hill isn't half as far from the barn as the river, and they will take water from that. Nobody will come near us, you may depend upon that."

"Where shall we go after the folks in town have all gone to bed?" asked Matt.

"About midnight we will follow the river up to the creek, and go on board of the old sail-boat. There is a nice little breeze blowing now, and it would carry us down to the Sound in two or three hours."

"Bully for you, Lon!" exclaimed Matt, who was delighted with this plan.

He had often thought of making a trip to the Sound in this boat; for, like most boys, he was fond of adventure. In accordance with this plan, the young villains made their way to the barn. Lon had prepared the combustibles. He had a slow-match, which was to burn down when they had placed half a mile or more between themselves and the barn; then it was to light a bunch of block matches, and this would

communicate the fire to a heap of combustibles under the floor of the barn. Unfortunately, every thing worked as had been intended, and the boys were in their hiding-place some time before the fire broke out. Of course no one would see them in the road, or anywhere near the fire.

Each kept up the courage of the other; and, if either had been alone, he would not have had the pluck to do the evil deed. If they had been alone they might have repented of the crime, and considered the consequences; but they talked of the trip to New York, and stifled their consciences with the glories of the excursion to the great city. It was late in August; and the weather was pleasant, though rather cool at night. It would be fine sailing on the Sound. At midnight they walked to the creek, and got into the old boat.

CHAPTER VI.

DOWN THE RIVER.

‘**N**OW we are all right,” said Lon, as he stepped into the boat.

“I don’t think any one has seen us,” added Matt, following his companion.

“No one could have seen us.”

“Shall we start now?”

“Yes: we may as well be moving. It must be twelve o’clock by this time,” added Lon, as he looked at his watch; but it was so dark he could not see a figure on the dial.

“Do you expect to get to New York in this boat, Lon?” asked Matt, as he seated himself in the stand-room.

“Of course I do: what’s to prevent? It don’t leak, and there is water all the way to New York.”

“But you don’t know how to manage a boat any more than I do,” said Matt, to whom this seemed to be a difficulty.

“It is easy enough to manage her; and, if I don’t know how, I can soon learn,” replied the master spirit of the enterprise. “I have seen how the thing is done, and I’m pretty sure that I can do it.”

“But your father would never let you have a boat, or even sail in this one.”

“Though he has been to sea for thirty years of his life, he is afraid of a sail-boat. He says he can handle a ship, but not one of these little things.”

“If we are going, why don't we go?” asked Matt.

“Because you don't hoist the sail.”

“I don't know any thing about the sail, and I don't believe I can hoist it. If Wade Brooks was here, he could do it; and he knows how to sail the boat, for he learned of his father. I heard some one say that he is a good boatman.”

“But Wade Brooks isn't here; and I am glad he is not,” replied Lon. “He is a goody; and I'll half kill him, if I ever see him again, for telling old Phil Garlick that we licked him for not stealing peaches.”

Matt went to the sail, and began to fumble it over in the darkness; but he could make nothing of it. On the whole, he was a rather stupid fellow, and he was not likely to learn any thing in the dark. He could not undo the sail; and he gave up the task in a moment in despair. Then Lon tried his hand, and succeeded in removing the stops. After trying all the ropes about the mast (for the boat was a sloop), he found the halyards. By observing what part of the sail moved when he pulled at these lines, he found which was the peak, and which was the throat halyard. Giving one to Matt, he heaved on the other; and at last they managed to get the sail up, though not in very good shape.

“Now you take an oar, Matt, and shove her out from the shore, while I mind the helm,” said Lon, as he assumed the duties of skipper.

There was no wind in the creek; and Matt worked the boat out into the river with the oar. As soon as she had passed a wooded point, the sail took the breeze, and the boat heeled over so as to scare Matt half out of his wits; for he had hardly ever been out in a sail-boat.

“Mind what you are about, Lon!” exclaimed Matt. “You will upset her; and then where shall we be?”

“In the water,” coolly replied Lon.

“But I don’t want to be in the water.”

“Nor I either; and I don’t think there is any more danger of it than there is of the sky falling. The boat is doing very well.”

The wind was north-west, and the course of the river was about south at the place where the adventurers embarked; and it was not very difficult to make the boat go after she felt the breeze. Lon had a tolerable idea of the handling of the tiller; for he had tried his hand at it in a stolen sail in this old boat. As long as it was plain sailing, he was likely to do very well. He experimented with the sail and the helm till he got the hang of them. When a bend of the river made the course south-west, he soon learned to haul in the sheet. The wind was so light that the boat did not make more than two miles an hour, and, as long as the skipper kept the

old craft in the middle of the river, there was nothing to prevent her from going, and it was not very perilous navigation.

“I can handle her first-rate now,” said Lon, when the boat had been moving about half an hour. “Long before we get to the Sound, I shall know all about this business.”

“It will be another thing when we get out of the river, and we have to go out to sea,” croaked Matt.

“What odds does it make whether we are in the river, or on the sound? Both of them are water; and the boat will go as long as she has any wind.”

“Suppose the wind comes from the wrong way: what are you going to do then?” inquired Matt.

“I know how to do it then. You keep her zigzagging towards the point where you want to go.”

“I have heard my father tell about some kind of a bad place which the steamboats have to go through when they go to New York: how will you get through that?” And Matt thought he had given Lon a poser this time.

“That’s Hell Gate; and I don’t intend to go through that, for it’s near New York; and we can go from there in some other way.”

Lon was entirely satisfied that he could take the boat as far as the dangerous place. Matt was getting tired of sailing in the night, when he could only see where the river was; and the air was cold and disagreeable. He had on his thin clothes, and was not fitted out for a sea-voyage in the night. Besides, he

was sleepy; for he had not closed his eyes that night. He gaped till he was in danger of throwing his jaw out of joint.

“What ails you, Matt?” asked Lon.

“I have got about enough of this thing,” replied Matt, with another fearful gape. “I am tired and sleepy, and I am almost froze.”

“You can go to sleep if you wish to do so,” replied Lon, who was dressed in thick clothes, and was quite comfortable in spite of the chill of the air.

“I can’t go to sleep while I am shivering with the cold,” replied Matt; and his whole frame shook as he spoke.

“Get into the cuddy, then, if you are cold. There was some hay in it the last time I was in the boat. You can bury yourself in it, and get warm,” said Lon, afraid that the discomfort of his companion might wreck the expedition.

“I don’t want to be in that cuddy when the boat is going,” whined Matt, his teeth chattering all the time. “Suppose she should hit on a rock, and sink: what would become of me?”

“You would be likely to get wet.”

“I should be likely to get drowned.”

“Why don’t you stir yourself? you can get warm if you will thrash your arms, or exercise yourself in some way. Get into the cuddy: there is no danger of rocks. If we should hit one, it wouldn’t do any harm. We are not going fast enough to break any thing.”

Matt was so cold that he was tempted to try the cuddy. He went to the door, and found that it was fastened. He tried to push it in, and to pull it out; but it resisted all his efforts. The iron hook on the inside held it as firm as though the door had been an immovable body.

“Break it in, if you can’t open it,” said Lon.

“I can’t break it in: I have tried.”

“Take one of the oars, and jam it through the board.”

“I don’t want to spoil the door,” replied Matt. “If it comes on to rain we shall want it.”

“But, if you can’t get into the cuddy, what good will it do us if it does rain?” demanded Lon impatiently; for he did not like Matt’s way of dealing with difficulties. “Smash it in.”

“I can’t do it.”

“Try it and see,” persisted Lon.

“I tell you I can’t,” snarled Matt.

“You are nothing but a baby, Matt Swikes,” added Lon, his patience all gone. “Here, hold this tiller, and I will open that door, or make a hole through the bottom of the boat.”

“I don’t know how to steer her,” pleaded Matt.

“I don’t want you to steer: she will steer herself, if you will hold this stick just as it is now.”

Matt took the tiller; and Lon seized the oar, with which he struck a heavy blow, driving the handle through the door. A second and a third time he applied this battering-ram to the impediment; and

the cuddy was open to the admission of the runaways.

“Now you can go in, and stow yourself away in the hay, Matt,” said Lon triumphantly.

“You have smashed the door into splinters, so there is nothing to keep the cold out,” growled Matt, as he gave up the tiller to Lon.

“You can get in out of the wind, and it will be warmer there than it is here,” added the skipper. “There is plenty of hay there, and you can make yourself comfortable.”

“I will try it,” said Matt, as he moved forward for this purpose.

We left Wade Brooks in this very cuddy; but, in spite of this rude onslaught on his abode, he did not make himself known to the incendiaries. Yet he was still in the cuddy, and understood the situation perfectly. He had slept soundly up to the time when Lon battered down the door. He woke in mortal terror. He saw the dim light through the hole which had been made by the oar. He was afraid the oar might hit him; and he retreated as far as he could into the bow of the boat, and stowed himself away between the mast and the stem, or as much of himself as the space would permit, taking his spare clothes with him. Lon made so much noise that he did not hear Wade move from his position.

Wade had plenty of hay in the bow; and, by the time Matt was ready to take possession of the cuddy, he was comfortably settled in his new quarters. As

soon as he heard the voices of the persons in the boat, he knew who they were; but he was not anxious to make himself known, for he was afraid Lon would take to pounding him. There was room enough in the cuddy for both of them, and without either knowing the other was there, unless an accident betrayed his presence.

Wade Brooks could not help thinking what would happen in the morning when his fellow-voyagers found that he was in the boat. Lon was a bully: he was such at school and on the playground. He had treated Wade like a tyrant. Wade began to think whether he could not do as a plucky little fellow did at school the winter before, — stand his ground, and in the end whip the bully. He was in the boat with him, and there was no chance to escape. He would try it; and he went to sleep thinking how to do it.

CHAPTER VII.

A STRIKE FOR INDEPENDENCE.

LON heard no more of his companion in crime, and he concluded that he had gone to sleep; as, in fact, he had almost as soon as he lay down. When the boat had been moving about an hour, she came into a flatter country, and the sail had more wind. The "Mud-turtle," as some of the boys who used the boat had christened her, was not a bad sailer, in spite of her name; and, with the freshening wind, she began to move at a very lively rate through the water. It was a little startling at first to the green skipper, who thought she must be making ten knots an hour, when she was doing only four. But he soon became accustomed to her heeling over, and to the flaws that sometimes struck her with considerable force.

But Lon had been up all night; and, when the excitement of managing the boat had died out, he began to yawn, and to be so sleepy that he could hardly keep his eyes open; and in the end it became impossible for him to do so. He wondered that the boat did not come to the Sound; for he believed he had sailed more than twelve miles, which was said to

be the distance. The time came, before any thing could be seen of the Sound, when he could stand it no longer. He dropped asleep at the helm; and more than once the boat broached to for the want of attention to the helm. The boat had an anchor and plenty of cable, though the wonder was that some one had not stolen it for a hay-rope.

Lon roused himself, and came to the conclusion that he would anchor the boat, and then go to sleep in the cuddy. He ran the "Mud-turtle" up to the side of the river, and lowered the sail. Then he let go the anchor. He tied up the sail, and fastened the cable, as he had seen a boatman do it, and then went into the cuddy. He felt about till he found a place not occupied by Matt, which was big enough for him to stretch himself out, and lay down. His feet were but a few inches from those of Wade; but he had no suspicion that the cuddy contained three persons. In a moment he was asleep, for the case was more desperate with him than it had been with Matt. All on board were asleep.

They all slept like tops till daylight in the morning, when Wade Brooks was the first to wake, as he had been the first to go to sleep: besides, this was his usual time to wake, and to get up. He missed the usual savage call of the farmer or his wife, and on this particular occasion he was not informed that he was a "lazy fellow." When he woke there was light enough in the cuddy for him to see that his companions were both sleeping very soundly. One of them

was on each side of the door; but there was space enough between them for him to get out of the cuddy. With the greatest care Wade passed out of the place into the standing-room.

If Wade had any doubts before as to who had set the barn on fire, he had none now. The bad boys had run away by the light of the fire they had kindled: they had run away. It was for this trip that Matt had stolen the money from his father; and no doubt he had it in his pocket at that moment. Wade sat down near the door of the cuddy, where he could see both of the sleeping conspirators against the peace of the town of Midhampton. He felt that Lon would pitch into him as soon as he woke; and he had made up his mind that he would not stand his abuse any longer. He was no longer in Midhampton — at least, he supposed he was not, but he could not tell where he was, — and Swikes could no longer pound him for what he did. He had made up his mind to fight, instead of allowing Lon and Matt to kick and beat him about as they had been in the habit of doing.

When he had reached this conclusion, he felt better. In the bottom of the boat he found a piece of a birch fish-pole, about half an inch in diameter, which he trimmed into shape for a club. He made it about two feet and a half long, and, for the want of something better to do, he whittled away at it for an hour or more: but he was thinking all the time how he should meet his tyrant; for such he had always been

to him, and Matt was no better. If there were to be any more "broken heads," they should be more equally distributed than formerly.

Wade wondered where the bad boys were going in the boat; but he could only suppose they intended to get out of the way after the mischief they had done, and had no suspicion that they had embarked for a long voyage, as he would have called that to New York. Then he began to think what a hard life he had led on the farm of Obed Swikes. Why should he be starved and frozen, and compelled to work so many hours in the day? Why should he stay with Swikes when he was so hardly used? Why should he be constantly lashed by the peppered tongue of Mrs. Swikes? She told him, every day he lived, that he did not earn his salt, and she should have to send him to the poorhouse, where he belonged. If he was of so little use to the Swikeses, why should he stay with them any longer? He would not. He decided not to return to Midhamp-ton.

Wade began to think that he was becoming very independent. But it was better to pick his living out of the swill-barrels of a great city than it was to eat the bread that was daily begrudged to him, though he earned four times as much as he received. He knew this by the wages Swikes paid when he had to hire a man in haying-time. He could get something to do on a farm, that would enable him to earn his living; but, whether he could or not, he would no

longer submit to be abused as he had been. He had often heard what a terrible thing it was for a boy to run away: but the Swikeses had no claim upon him; they were no relation to him, and they complained that he was a burden to them. He would relieve them of the burden. He had no master by rights; and he would be his own master in the future.

While he was thinking of all these things, he saw Matt moving as though he intended to wake. He watched him, and made sure that his stick was where he could use it. But the Swikes did not get up, though it was clear enough that he was awake; and Wade kept his eye upon him. He sat where the fugitive could not see him. Matt lay on his back, and seemed to be reviewing the events of the night before. He put his hand into his pocket, and drew out the wallet he had stolen from the closet over the mantle-piece. He took from it the money it contained; and, laying the wallet on the hay by his side, he proceeded to count the bills, of which there was a large roll, and they must have been small ones.

Matt spent a full hour in this pleasing occupation, for those who love money like to count it. But he seemed to be doing something more than merely counting it; for he laid off the bills in two piles, and then counted each of them several times, as though he could not make them come out right. Finally he put the two packages of bills into separate compartments of the wallet.

Wade wondered what he was thinking about, for

he lay there musing with the wallet in his hand. Possibly he was thinking how his father would miss and mourn over that money. Wade saw him look several times at his sleeping companion; and the two rolls of bills indicated that he intended to divide the ill-gotten treasure with Lon. Perhaps he had his doubts whether it was best for him to do so. He knew what a bully Lon was.

Finally Wade saw him pull up the hay from the bottom of the cuddy, and from his side of the bulkhead he perceived that a narrow board had been taken from the floor. Looking into the space below, he saw Matt deposit the wallet under the floor, reaching up so as to place it where the water in the bottom of the boat could not reach it. He did not restore the board he had removed, but covered the aperture with hay. Having done this, he lay down on his bed once more. Wade heard him gape, and concluded that he intended to take another nap, as Lon did not wake. In a few minutes he heard him snore as he had done in the night.

Just out of curiosity, Wade thrust his hand into the space below the flooring, and felt in the direction Matt had put his hand. He found the wallet. He drew it out. He took one of the rolls of bills out of the compartment, and counted the money. One hundred dollars: this was half of the sum farmer Swikes had mentioned. He counted the other roll: it was the other half. Two hundred dollars was the sum the farmer had lost. Here it was: it

was in the hands of the boy of all work, whom the Swikeses had overworked and abused. If Wade could have returned the money to his tyrants without going to Midhampton, he would have done it. Though he was accused of stealing it, he was disposed to do the right thing.

Worldly-wise people would have said that he was a fool; and the Devil tempted him with visions of the comforts this large sum would purchase for the friendless boy; but he was determined to keep it, and have it restored to its rightful owner as soon as he could, even if he had to go back to Midhampton to do it. This was the sort of boy Wade Brooks was. He had the reputation of being a "goody," and the bad boys ridiculed him for it; but it was deserved, whether it was applied in honor or in scorn.

Wade was tempted to get up the anchor, and run the boat to the shore, so that he could get away from his wicked companions. Very likely he would have done so, and walked back to Midhampton, if he had not feared that the noise he would have to make on the forward deck, over the heads of the sleepers, would wake them. While he was considering this plan, Lon Trustleton waked; and, unlike his companion, he did not lie thinking, but jumped up at once, and went into the standing-room.

He was startled, and stopped, standing as though he had suddenly been changed into a statue, when he saw Wade Brooks seated in the standing-room. He seemed to think it was a ghost, for he could not see

how it was possible for Wade to be in the boat with him when he had not seen him before.

“Wade Brooks!” exclaimed Lon, when he had found his tongue.

“That’s my name,” replied Wade, grasping his stick closely in his hand.

“How came you here, Wade?” demanded Lon.

“I guess you can tell better than I can.”

“None of your lip; but answer my question,” said Lon, who had by this time recovered his self-possession.

“I’m willing to answer the question, though it is not a very civil one,” replied Wade. “I went into the boat to sleep; and, when I woke, you were beating in the door of the cuddy: that’s all I know about it.”

“I promised to give you a broken head if I ever saw you again, for what you said to Garlick;” and Lon made a dig at him.

That stick flashed in the air, and Lon fell.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BATTLE IN THE BOAT.

LON TRUSTLETON may be excused for being astonished at the very remarkable conduct of Wade Brooks, who had never before lifted a finger against his persecutors. All of a sudden he had struck a blow which upset his foe as though he had been a baby. But Lon was not badly damaged, though he saw a numerous body of stars. He picked himself up; and, as he had plenty of pluck, he rushed upon the object of his wrath, intending to take the stick from him, and use it over his head.

But Wade was not asleep; and he was prepared for his assailant. Before Lon could get hold of him or the stick, another blow fell on his head, and he staggered back towards the cuddy. The second blow wilted him; and, though he was very angry, he found it necessary to be prudent. He stood by the door of the cuddy, with his fists doubled up, and his chest heaving with the fury of his rage, regarding his enemy with mingled astonishment and indignation. The noise of the encounter had waked Matt; and he crawled out of the cuddy to ascertain the cause of the tempest.

If Lon had been surprised to see Wade Brooks in the boat, Matt was still more so. He could not realize how it was possible for him to be there, for he had seen him go up to his garret to bed the night before. Both Lon and himself had slept in the cuddy, and certainly the boy of all work had not been in the standing-room when he retired. A little reflection led him to the conclusion that Wade could not have been in the boat during the night. He thought he could explain it: a party had set out to pursue them, and Wade had followed the boat down the river on the shore, and had come on board of her in the morning. The water was very shallow where the boat was anchored, and he could have waded off to her.

“Wade Brooks here!” exclaimed he, when he found a tongue.

“Yes; and he has hit me twice over the head with that stick,” replied Lon, still eying the enemy with a savage gaze.

“How came he here? when did he come into the boat?” asked Matt, though he had settled all these questions in his own mind before he said a word.

“He says he went to sleep in the boat last night, and we sailed off with him,” replied Lon. “Is there any kind of a club in the cuddy, Matt? We are in for a fight; and I will break that fellow’s head, as I told you I would.”

“We are going to divide up the broken heads more than they used to be,” said Wade coolly; for

he had made up his mind for this thing, and he was ready for whatever might come.

Matt looked for a stick; but the stock of fish-pole in the boat had given out when Wade was supplied. Nothing could be found but the pieces of the door Lon had stove in the night before. These were all small, and no club was at hand. But Lon picked up the splinters, and began to hurl them at his foe. He cast them with all his might; and, if any of them had hit Wade in the head, they would have hurt him.

“That will do of that,” said Wade, gathering up his stick again. “Don’t you fling another one of them at me!”

“Yes, I will! I’ll break your head before I’ve done with you!” replied Lon; and he picked up what was left of the door, intending to overwhelm his antagonist in one crushing blow.

But Wade did not wait for him to get the door in position: he rushed upon him, and began to belabor him over the shoulders with the stick. Lon howled with rage and pain, and vainly struggled to get hold of the stick or his assailant. But Wade was too much for him. As for Matt, he made for the cuddy as soon as Wade began to press his companion. After a brief contest, Lon went down under the force of the blows that were rained upon him.

“When you want any more, all you got to do is to say so,” said the conqueror. “I didn’t begin this fight; but I’m going to see the end of it.”

"You don't fight fair," gasped Lon, using the common argument of the defeated bully.

"I fight any way I can. I don't believe in fighting at all, and I never did any such thing before in my life," replied Wade, still holding his weapon ready for use. "You've always hit me just when you had a mind to, and I have always stood it; but I'm not going to stand it any more. When you hit me, I'm going to hit back again, whatever comes of it. I won't hurt anybody that lets me alone."

"Why didn't you stand by me, Matt Swikes?" demanded Lon, as Matt crawled out of the cuddy again; which he did not do till Wade had assumed a more peaceable aspect.

"I wasn't going to be hit over the head with that stick," replied Matt, seating himself by the door of the cuddy.

"You're a coward, Matt Swikes, as you always were; and I have half a mind to hit you over the head," added Lon, disgusted with his companion, and entirely unable to account for his defeat in a battle with a fellow whom he had always regarded as an insignificant foe.

"It's no use to call names: they won't hurt anybody," growled Matt, who could not see why his crony should turn against him. "You've licked Wade Brooks times enough to know how to do it; and I don't think it is fair for two of us to set on one fellow."

"Not fair, you ninny!" exclaimed Lon, slapping the face of his companion in crime.

“What are you hitting me for? I haven’t touched you. You needn’t lick me because you can’t lick Wade,” whined Matt. “I’ve got about enough of this thing.”

“I’ll bet they are looking for you at home about this time,” interposed Wade; “and the best thing you can do is to go back before you’ve made the matter any worse.”

“I’ve half a mind to do it,” replied Matt, who was so much injured in his feeling by the blow of Lon, that he could not help crying. “I’m not going off to New York with Lon, to be kicked and slapped as if I wasn’t nobody.”

“Shut up, Matt!” said Lon sharply. “What do you mean by telling him what we are going to do?”

“I’m not going to do any thing, if I’m to be treated in this way.”

“Keep still,” continued Lon in a gentler tone. “I was mad, and I didn’t mean any thing. Don’t mind it, Matt, and I won’t do it again.”

It was a great deal for Lon to say any thing in the shape of an apology; and the insulted Matt was appeased at once. He wanted to go to New York; and he did not like the idea of going home to take the consequences of setting the barn on fire. Lon seated himself opposite his companion in crime, as though he had concluded that it was best to suspend hostilities, at least for the present.

“I didn’t sleep much last night, and I was out of

temper when I got up," said Lon, who was willing to make peace, even with Wade Brooks, rather than give up the expedition, as he was afraid that Matt might be persuaded to do; and he had all the money, so it was not possible to go without him.

"I don't see what made you turn on me," replied Matt, wiping the tears from his eyes.

"I didn't mean to do it. The sight of Wade Brooks here in the boat with us made me mad. But perhaps it is all for the best. Wade knows how to sail a boat better than I do; and he will do that for us."

"No, I won't," replied Wade squarely.

"How came you in the boat, Wade?" asked Matt, as it occurred to him that this matter had not yet been cleared up.

"I came on board of her to sleep after the fire," replied Wade, who was willing to tell all he knew about almost any subject.

"What did you want to sleep in the boat for? Why couldn't you sleep in your own bed in the house?"

"There was a good reason for it."

Wade considered a moment; and then he concluded to tell the whole story.

"What was the reason?" asked Matt.

"I'll tell you all I know about it; and I know more than you think I do," replied Wade, looking Matt sharp in the eye. "You lied to your mother when you told her I stole the peaches; and she sent

me to bed without any supper. I was so confounded hungry that I could not go to sleep; and I got up, and went down to the buttery to get something to eat. I was in there when you got up in that chair, and took the money out of that closet over the mantle-piece."

"What money?" asked Matt, turning pale, and trembling with terror.

"I guess you know what money as well as I do. The money that was in the closet. You stole it, and then cleared out."

"Do you mean to say that I stole any money, Wade Brooks?" demanded Matt, making a lame attempt to bluster, which was a failure.

"That's just what I mean to say, and I do say it. It's no use to deny it."

"Let him go on," added Lon, in a low tone.

"I deny that I took any money from any closet," said Matt; "but go on with your story."

"I guess I could prove that you did it, right here, if I had a mind to," added Wade.

He was tempted to do so, and to take the money from his pocket as evidence of what he asserted; but just then it came into his mind, that, if Matt knew he had it, he would say he stole it; and, if he went back to Midhampton, the possession of the two hundred dollars might be evidence that he did steal it. If he told Mrs. Swikes that her son took the wallet, she would not believe him. Wade concluded not to say just yet that he had the plunder.

“I don’t see what all this has to do with sleeping in the boat.”

“That’s what I was going to tell you when you broke in on me. After you took the money, your father came out of the room. Your mother said she heard somebody in the house, and told your father to see if the money in the closet was all right. He felt in the closet, and found that it was gone. In that house they always lay every thing to me, and your mother said I must have taken it.”

“If any money was taken, I guess you did,” interposed Matt; and, if he was caught, he could lay it to him with a full knowledge of the case.

“You know better, Matt Swikes; but no matter now. Your father went up to the garret, and found I was not there. Then they were sure I took the money. I’d been licked once that day for what I didn’t do, and I couldn’t stand it again. Just then the fire broke out, and your father and mother went out of the house; and I hooked it out, and after a while went down to the boat to sleep. I meant to call on Mr. Garlick this morning, and tell him what I knew about matters and things in general. That’s why I slept in the boat.”

CHAPTER IX.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT.

MATT looked at Lon, and Lon looked at Matt. There was a general looking at each other in the boat.

“Now I’ve told you why I slept in the boat, maybe you will tell me, Matt, how you happened to be sailing in the ‘Mud-turtle’ so late in the night,” said Wade Brooks.

“We only came down here to have a sail. We are going down to the Sound,” replied Matt, looking at his companion.

“You said you were bound to New York,” added Wade with a significant wink.

“I said that in fun,” laughed Matt. “Of course we shouldn’t think of such a thing as going to New York in this old boat.”

“I shouldn’t think you’d go to New York in this boat,” added Wade.

“We haven’t got any thing to eat, and no money to buy any thing with: so we couldn’t go if we wanted to,” continued Matt, with a sly wink at Lon.

The remark that they had no money was truer

than either of them supposed; but, for the present, Wade kept his own counsel.

“What were you going to talk with Garlick about, Wade?” asked Lon, who did not exactly like the looks of this statement.

“Matters and things in general,” replied Wade. “In the first place, I was accused of stealing that money; and, as Mr. Garlick seems to be a fair man, I wanted to talk with him about that. He was fair about the peaches; and, when he found he was wrong, he owned right up like a man. I wanted to ask him what he thought I had better do about it. I knew Matt took the money, for I saw him do it. Then I wanted to tell him that Matt was out of the house just before the fire; for I thought he might want to know about that.”

“What do you mean by that, Wade?” demanded Matt, beginning to shake in his shoes again.

“When the fire broke out in that barn, I knew as well as I do now who touched it off,” added Wade, in a very matter-of-fact manner, rather than as one who was making grave charges.

“Who was it, Wade?” asked Matt, so agitated that he could hardly speak.

“You and Lon, of course; and I guess about all the folks in town know it by this time. When I was going down to the boat I heard two men in a wagon talking about it.”

“That Lon and I set Garlick’s barn on fire!” exclaimed Matt. “It’s the biggest lie that ever was told!”

“I guess not,” added Wade. “Your folks will be willing to believe it when they find you are gone; and they know it by this time.”

“Are we to be accused of setting that barn on fire because we came down here to take a sail?” demanded Matt with all the indignation he could assume.

“I guess so,” said Wade, with a smile at the thin talk of Matt.

“Let it drop,” added Lon, who did not believe it was of any use to deny the charge, if it was all over town.

“But, if you are going to New York, it is time to be moving,” said Wade with a chuckle. “Where are we now?”

“We can’t be a great way from the mouth of the river,” replied Lon, beginning to hoist the mainsail.

Wade took hold, and helped him, and did not retain possession of the stick, for Lon seemed to be entirely peaceful.

Wade got up the anchor, and then hoisted the jib, which Lon had not used the night before. The breeze was quite fresh, and the old boat bounded off on her course at a lively rate. Lon was not timid; but, when the “Mud-turtle” heeled down till the water began to run in over the wash-board, it was too trying for his nerves.

“Won’t you steer her, Wade?” he asked. “I am not much used to a boat.”

“I see you are not,” laughed Wade, as he took the tiller. “You should have let off the sheet, or headed

her more up into the wind. But where are we going?"

"Down to the Sound," replied Lon.

"But we are not going to New York without any breakfast, are we?" inquired Wade, who had eaten a very unsatisfactory supper the night before, and felt the need of food.

"We must have something to eat," added Matt.

"We will stop and buy something when we see a store on shore," replied Lon. "You seem to know every thing, Wade Brooks: do you suppose the folks in Midhampton are looking for us?"

"Of course they are. Your father begun last night, I guess."

"Do you think they will miss the boat?"

"Maybe they will; but nobody goes to the creek very often. It will be just as it happens."

"Somebody may have come down here by the railroad to look for us," suggested Matt.

"Very likely," added Wade, who was not a good comforter on this occasion.

Lon and Matt talked the matter over between themselves; and, while they were doing so, Wade discovered a village ahead. He said nothing, but run the boat for it. In a short time Lon saw it. A train of cars was approaching it from the north.

"We have concluded not to stop at this place to get any thing to eat," said Lon.

"Have you?" added Wade. "Well, I've concluded to stop here."

“Do you think it is safe to do so?” asked Lon anxiously.

“It’s safe enough for me: I don’t know how it is with you. If Matt didn’t steal that money, and if you didn’t set Mr. Garlick’s barn on fire, it is as safe for you as Midhampton,” replied Wade, with a laugh, for it amused him to see the guilty ones squirm.

Lon did not want to talk any more with Wade about the matter. He persisted in knowing all about the fire and the money, and would not keep still. He had taken the bit in his teeth, and intended to sail the boat where he pleased.

“Let’s go into the cuddy, and keep out of sight,” said Matt.

Wade smiled again, for he saw that Matt wanted to get his money from under the floor more than he wanted to keep out of sight. When the boat came around a bend, the skipper saw a bridge across the river, just below the village; and he knew that the railroad which crossed it went to New York. He was not sure that the bad boys did not intend to abandon the boat, and take the train for the great city. He wished to go there himself, for he thought he could get work there. But he was confident, that, whatever Lon intended to do, they would not take any train to New York, for they would soon find that they had no money to pay the fare.

He heard them fumbling about the cuddy, and he knew that Matt could not find the treasure. But, if the boat was to stop at the town, it was time to pre-

pare for the landing ; and, if she was not to stop, it was time to look out for the bridge, for the mast seemed to be too tall to pass under it. If no one on board had any money, it was no use to land to obtain something to eat. Wade regarded the money in his pocket as held in trust, and he determined to be hungry for some time before he spent any of it for provisions.

Wade run the boat close to the bridge, and found that the mast would go under it ; but he was not quite willing to leave the village till the question of food had been settled. He was confident the runaways intended to go to New York in the boat, and he believed they had made some arrangements to feed themselves on the way. Putting the boat about, he headed her up the river again.

Lon and Matt were so busy in the cuddy, that they gave no heed to the boat, and continued their search for the lost treasure. Of course they did not find it ; and, when they gave up in despair, they had an earnest conversation, but Wade could not hear a word of it. They did not mean he should hear it, for it related to him. The conference continued for a long time ; and, finding that it was not likely soon to be ended, Wade lowered the jib, and made a landing in the upper part of the village.

As soon as the boat was secured to the shore, Lon came out of the cuddy, followed by Matt. Both of them looked as though something had happened.

“ Well, what are you going to do here, Wade ? ” asked Lon in a sullen tone.

“ If you fellows are going to New York in this boat, this is the place for you to take in provisions for the cruise, ” said Wade good-naturedly.

“ We are not going to New York in this boat, ” replied Lon sourly ; and the loss of the treasure had changed the whole face of nature to him.

“ Well, here we are ; and, whatever you are going to do, now is the time to begin it, ” added Wade, who stood in the standing-room, putting the stops on the mainsail.

“ I think so myself, ” replied Lon, suddenly springing upon the skipper, and throwing his arms around his neck, trying to get him on the floor.

But Wade had found his pluck before ; and, as he was a stouter fellow, Lon soon realized that he was more than an armful for him. But a sharp struggle ensued, for Lon was fighting for freedom and safety. The money was gone, and without that they could not go to New York or anywhere else. They could not even pay for the food for a breakfast. They were confident that Wade had taken the money from its hiding-place, for the simple reason that no one else could have taken it. The wallet could not have taken itself out of the way ; and Lon found that it could not have dropped into any hole, for there was no hole there. Besides, Wade had suddenly taken the bit into his teeth, and become as independent as a basket of chips. He had the money, and this was what made him so unmanageable.

Matt attempted to assist his companion, but a smart kick from Wade caused him to retire from the contest. After a sharp struggle, Wade came down in the bottom of the boat, with Lon under him; and the strife was ended. All of them were so occupied in the battle, that they did not notice the approach of two men, who had come from the village on the railroad, and reached the boat about the time that Lon went under. Matt was the first to see them.

“Hold on, Wade,” said he in trembling tones: “here is your father, Lon, and mine too!”

But Wade Brooks could not see them, for he was busy in attending to his prisoner.

“What are you about, you villain?” called Capt. Trustleton in a sharp tone. “Let him alone.”

Wade let him up at the sound of this voice. As usual, he was caught in a doubtful position when he was entirely innocent: it was just his luck.



THE BATTLE IN THE BOAT. — Page 78.

CHAPTER X.

A STRAIGHTFORWARD STATEMENT.

WHEN Capt. Trustleton reached his elegant abode, after his call at the house of Obed Swikes, he found, as he had supposed, that Alonzo was not in his room. Then he examined his desk in the library, where he had a small sum of money; but it had not been disturbed. The captain was a man of action; and he lost no time in beginning the search for his wayward boy. He called his two hired men, and procured the services of half a dozen others; but he did not call for any officers, for he wanted to settle the case himself.

He was confident that the two boys had not come to the village after setting the fire; for they would have met the people on their way to it. He came to the conclusion that they had taken to the woods for the night, and that they would depart by the first train in the morning; for the loss of Swikes's money indicated they were well supplied with funds. He set the men to searching the country between the river and the road; and, about one o'clock, they came to the creek. One of the men occasionally used the boat, and he missed it. Looking down the

river, he saw the sail of the "Mud-turtle," which had not been under way more than half an hour. The man did not see the captain till two hours after he made this discovery; for he was following the river road in his buggy for several miles, thinking it was possible that the runaways might have walked to the next town. When he learned that the boat was gone, he gave up the search for that night; but early in the morning he was at the house of Obed Swikes, and they had taken the first train for the south, which had arrived just as the boat came to Rivermouth, the village where the railroad crossed the river.

The pursuers had not deemed it wise to show themselves, lest the boys should attempt to escape. They watched the boat, intending to follow it as soon as they could learn where it was going. When Wade put her about, and stood up the river, they had followed on the railroad. As soon as it was made fast to the shore, they were ready to take possession of the boat and its crew. Capt. Trustleton was not a little alarmed when he saw the fierce battle that was in progress in the standing-room. Neither he nor Swikes had expected to find Wade Brooks with the fugitives, for they were not on good terms the day before; and certainly their relations did not appear to be any more friendly than then.

"What are you choking my boy for, you villain?" demanded Capt. Trustleton, springing into the boat, catching Wade Brooks by the collar, and shaking him up very thoroughly.

Wade thought he could handle the son, but he did not care to contend with the father. When the captain had shaken him to his heart's content, he pitched him over into one corner of the standing-room. Wade picked himself up, and, stepping upon the forward deck, placed a respectful distance between himself and the angry father.

"What on airth are you a-doin' here, Wade Brooks?" added Swikes, — "fightin' too?"

"Do you want to kill my boy?" demanded Capt. Trustleton.

"He begun it; and that was the second time he pitched into me to-day," pleaded Wade. "I won't stand it to have him hammer me whenever he takes a notion to do so."

"He pounded me almost to death with a club this morning," whined Lon, when he had picked himself up.

"What did you pitch into him for?" asked his father, who seemed to have some faith in Wade's report.

"He's always interfering with me," answered Lon, who was not disposed to give the true reason for his attack.

"He interfered with your stealing peaches yesterday, didn't he?" demanded the father sternly.

Lon hung his head; for he saw that his father knew all about the events of the day before.

"Now, Wade Brooks, what did you do with the money you stole from the closet over the mantletry-

piece?" said Swikes, coming to the question that was nearest to his heart.

"I didn't steal it," replied Wade; and he began to wish the wallet was not in his pocket under the present circumstances: it was just his luck.

"Who did steal it, then? You was gone from the garret before the fire broke out; and I knowed you had it when I found you was gone."

"Matt took it, and I saw him do it," replied Wade; but he had no hope of making the farmer believe what he said.

"I took it!" exclaimed Matt, with a violent show of indignation. "It's an awful lie!"

"I can't believe you would take all that money from your own father," added Swikes. "It don't look reasonable to me."

"I didn't do it, father: I wouldn't do such a thing!" protested Matt, taking the cue his father gave him. "I didn't know that you had lost any money. If anybody took it, Wade Brooks must have done it."

"There, Capt. Trustleton! I told you so!" exclaimed Swikes triumphantly. "I told you my boy wouldn't do such a thing. He did not even know that the money was gone."

"Perhaps he didn't know it; but boys who can set a barn on fire out of spite are not generally too good to tell lies; and, for the present, I am not inclined to believe what either of them may say," replied Capt. Trustleton coldly.

“Set a barn on fire, father!” exclaimed Lon, apparently as much astonished as Matt had been. “Who did such a thing, sir?”

“Mr. Garlick says you and Matthew Swikes did.”

“Why, father! I hope you didn’t believe such a thing!” protested Lon.

“I am sorry to say that I did believe it; and I have not changed my mind much since. What are you doing down here in this boat?”

“We only came down to take a sail,” replied Lon.

“That’s all, sir,” added Matt.

“You selected a strange time to take a sail,” said the captain, looking his son sharp in the eye, so that Lon hung his head. “Where were you going to?”

“Only down to the Sound.”

“And did you invite Wade Brooks to go with you?”

“No, sir: he invited himself. We didn’t know he was in the boat till this morning.”

“After he stole the money, he went down to the boat to sleep in the cuddy,” interposed Matt, who was anxious to convict Wade. “He was asleep in there when we started; and he was as ugly as sin this morning.”

“That’s just the way it was done,” added Swikes.

“I should like to hear the Brooks boy on that subject,” said Capt. Trustleton.

“It don’t make no difference what the Brooks boy says. He don’t tell the truth; and he’s too

cunning to tell you that he took the money," protested Swikes.

"How came you in the boat?" inquired the captain, turning to Wade.

"I'm going to tell the whole truth if I'm killed for it," replied Wade, as he stepped down into the standing-room, and seated himself opposite Capt. Trustleton.

"Mind you do! and don't tell me Matthew took the money," said Swikes.

"I shall tell you he did, for that's the truth," replied Wade.

Beginning back at the flogging the female Swikes had given him, he related all that occurred up to the arrival of the two fathers of the runaways. When he came to speak of the money which Matt was counting in the cuddy, Swikes was all attention; for he was thinking whether or not he should ever see it again.

"You saw Matthew put the wallet under the floor, did you?" asked Swikes, greatly excited, as he glanced at the cuddy, hoping soon to be told that it was still there.

"Yes, sir: that's what I said," continued Wade.

"It's all a lie, father!" exclaimed Matt.

"Don't you say any thing till Brooks has finished," said Capt. Trustleton sternly. "Go on, Brooks."

"Matt didn't know I was in the boat. He was back to me, and I sat on this seat where I am now,"

Wade proceeded. "When he had divided the money into two piles, he put them in different pockets of the wallet. Pretty soon he pulled away the hay under where he had been sitting, and took up one of the narrow boards. You see where that one is gone," and Wade pointed to the opening in the floor. "I looked in the hole on this side, and I saw him put the wallet in there. When he had done it, he lay down, and went to sleep."

"But where is the wallet now? Is it in that hole?" demanded Swikes impatiently, as he rose from his seat to look for the missing treasure.

"No, sir: it is not there now, for I took it out while both of them were asleep; and here it is," replied Wade, taking the wallet from his pocket, and giving it to the owner.

"I knew he had it!" incautiously exclaimed Lon.

"Oh! you did?" said Capt. Trustleton. "How did you know he had it?"

"I meant that I knew he stole it," replied Lon, seeing he had been guilty of a slip of the tongue.

"No, sir: that was not what he meant," added Wade. "I will tell you what he meant before I get through. When we got to this place, Lon told me they had concluded not to stop here to get any thing to eat; but I said I had concluded to stop. Then they went into the cuddy, and staid there half an hour or longer. I saw them pulling away the hay, and I knew they were looking for the money. As I was bound to stop here, I made up my mind that

they went for the money, meaning to take a train to New York, and get rid of me. Then they came out of the cabin, and Lon pitched into me: Matt tried to help him. We were at it when you came, but I had got the best of it."

"Matt didn't help me as he agreed to do," said Lon, putting his foot into it again; for he seemed to believe it was necessary to explain to his father why he had lost the battle.

"Then Matthew agreed to help you?" added the captain. "What did he agree to help you do, my son?"

"To help me lick Wade Brooks before we left the boat."

"They were not so anxious to lick me as they were to get that wallet," said Wade. "Lon came at me behind, and tried to pull me down. If he wanted to lick me, he would have taken that stick, and used it as I did."

"I don't believe a word of that story!" exclaimed Swikes.

"If that story is not true, Brooks has more talent for lying than your boy or mine," answered Capt. Trustleton. "It is a straightforward statement."

Wade Brooks began to have some hope that he might not be utterly condemned.

CHAPTER XI.

A HUNGRY SKIPPER.

CAPT. TRUSTLETON went over the case; but he was unable to convince Obed Swikes that his boy took the money. He was simply determined not to accept the explanation. It was a good deal more convenient for him to believe that Wade Brooks had done the deed. The wallet was in his possession, and he must have taken it.

“Open the wallet, Mr. Swikes, and let us see if the money is all there,” suggested Capt. Trustleton. “You have the wallet; but there may be no money in it.”

Swikes was appalled at the very suggestion. He took the wallet from his pocket, and opened it. His eyes lighted up with joy when he saw the two rolls of bills.

“How much was there in the wallet?” asked the captain.

“Just two hundred dollars,” replied Swikes, as he took the two rolls of bills from the wallet. “If you will count one of these, I will the other.”

The captain took the one handed to him, and proceeded to count it.

“Just one hundred dollars,” he replied, when he had finished it.

“And there is just one hundred in this one,” added Swikes.

“Now, Matthew, why did you divide the money into two parts?” demanded the captain sharply, as he turned upon Matt.

“I was going to give half — I didn’t divide it! I didn’t have the money. I didn’t know the money was stolen!” protested Matt, recovering his self-possession a little too late.

“You were going to give half to Alonzo, was what you began to say,” added Capt. Trustleton. “Now, Mr. Swikes, I regard this as a plain case. You find the money divided into two parts, just as Brooks said. Your boy was surprised into saying he was going to give half, before he changed his tone. If Brooks stole the money, he had no motive for dividing it in this way. Let us look at it on another tack. Whether your boy and mine set fire to Garlick’s barn, I don’t know: if they did, that was a good reason why they should clear out as they did. We find these boys here ten miles from home. They say they were going down to the Sound, two miles farther. We find in the boat nothing to eat. My boy has no money. Neither of them is fool enough to start on such a trip without food or money. It is more likely to me that your boy took the money from the closet, to enable them to pay the expenses of the trip to New York, than that Brooks took it

and my boy is just as guilty as yours. I don't want to believe this, but it is forced home to my mind."

"You are hard on my boy, Capt. Trustleton," said Swikes, shaking his head.

"No harder than I am on my own son. I think that both of them have been bad boys, and it is better for us to look the matter square in the face than it is to blind our own eyes to the facts. But it is almost time for that train home; and we can settle the matter just as well there as here. But what shall be done with this boat?"

"I suppose Wade Brooks can take it back," replied Swikes.

It was settled that Wade should sail the boat back to Midhampton, while the two fathers and sons returned by the train.

"And, when he does get back, I mean to have him taken up and sent to the House of Correction for stealing that money," said Swikes bitterly.

"I think if you get the case into court, you will be more likely to send your own son there. I have no doubt Matthew is the thief," replied the captain. "Why do you keep your money in an open closet, and then tell a boy like Wade Brooks where it is?"

"I didn't tell where it was," added Swikes.

"How did he know, then?"

"I didn't know; I had no idea there was any money in the closet. If you please, Mr. Swikes, I should like some breakfast before I sail the boat home," said Wade very respectfully.

“You won’t git nothin’ till you git home,” replied the stingy farmer. “Do you suppose I’m going to spend money to feed you down here?”

Swikes thought a thing so absurd ought not to be expected of him; and he did not give it a second thought.

“I didn’t have any supper last night, as I told you; and I only found some crusts of brown bread when I got up in the night, and I’m almost starved,” pleaded poor Wade, whose stomach was protesting violently against the injustice done to it.

“I can’t help it. You hadn’t any business to come down here.”

“I didn’t come of my own accord; and if I hadn’t come, you never would have got your money again,” added Wade. “I can’t sail the boat back without something to eat.”

“Then you may walk back, for I won’t pay your fare on the cars,” said Swikes, who was by all odds the meanest man in Midhampton.

“I think it is a hard case, my lad,” interposed Capt. Trustleton; “and here is a dollar to buy your breakfast.”

“I thank you, sir! I am very much obliged to you, and I hope that some time I may be able to do something for you,” said Wade warmly.

“He don’t need all that money, Capt. Trustleton, and you will spoil the boy,” growled Swikes, who was disgusted with this prodigality.

The captain and his son walked towards the sta-

tion, followed by Matt ; but Swikes lingered behind for some reason.

“Here, Wade Brooks, give me that dollar,” said the skinflint. “I ain’t a-going to have no sich waste of money. Here is five cents to buy some crackers for you; and that’s enough till you git home.”

“Capt. Trustleton gave the money to me, and I am going to keep it,” replied Wade stoutly; and he meant what he said.

“No, you ain’t a-going to keep it nuther! You’ll fool it all away; and it will pay my fare down and back on the cars. So give it to me this minute.”

“I won’t do it, Obed Swikes,” said Wade. “That dollar won’t pay no fare of yours to-day.”

“If you don’t give it to me this minute, I’ll shake it out of your hide!”

“Shake away! You don’t get that dollar out of me as long as I can hold on to it.”

Wade retreated to the stern of the boat, which was out in the deep water; and Swikes followed him.

When the boy had gone as far as he could, Swikes attempted to collar him; but Wade dodged, and his persecutor, who was walking on the seat, canted the boat so that he lost his balance, and rolled into the river. But the water was not more than four feet deep; and, when he recovered his footing, he walked up the steep incline to the shore. Matt saw this accident to his father, and all the party hastened back.

“What’s the matter, Mr. Swikes?” asked the captain.

“That boy pushed me into the water,” replied the miser, blowing the water out of his mouth, and shaking himself like a water-dog.

Capt. Trustleton looked at Wade when this charge was made against him; but the boy offered no defence.

“What’s the trouble here, Brooks?” asked the captain.

“Didn’t I tell you that boy pushed me into the water? You needn’t ask him any thing about it. He’ll lie to you if you do,” snarled Swikes.

“I don’t think Brooks does all the lying that is done around here,” added Capt. Trustleton. “I want to hear what Brooks has to say about it.”

“I didn’t push him overboard, or touch him,” replied the persecuted boy.

“Well, he tipped the boat so as to throw me out,” added Swikes.

“Mr. Swikes tried to make me give him the dollar you let me have; and, when I told him I wouldn’t give it up, he said he’d shake it out of me. I told him to shake away, and he tried to grab me. I ran aft, and got out of his way; and when the boat canted a little it tipped him over.”

“Served him right,” said the captain. “Don’t you give him the dollar. The money was for you, and not for him.”

“You take that boy’s part against me, Capt. Trustleton, and ’tain’t right to do so.”

“Yes, it is right, when you treat him worse than a pig. I wonder now that he didn’t keep your money when he got it into his fist. He could have run the boat ashore as soon as he got the wallet, and taken the next train for New York. It is very strange to me that he didn’t do it, if you use him in this way.”

Certainly the captain was plain-spoken, and Obed Swikes did not like his speech; but he was too wet and cold to argue the question, and he walked towards the station. Wade soon found himself alone in the boat. He had a dollar in his pocket, which was more money than he had ever possessed before: it seemed like a vast sum to him. But he was very hungry, and he soon followed the party to the village. It was but a small place, consisting of not more than a dozen houses. He found that there was no tavern, store, or eating-house, in the place: all these were at the village two miles distant.

“Isn’t there any place where I can get something to eat?” asked Wade of the woman who had given him the information.

“None nearer than the West Village,” she replied.

“I have had nothing but a few crusts to eat since yesterday; and I have to sail a boat up to Midhampton, and I can’t do it without something to eat,” added Wade, in a mournful tone.

“I will give you something to eat,” said the woman kindly. “I am willing to feed the hungry, but I am afraid of tramps.”

“I’m not a tramp yet, marm: I don’t know what I may be. I am willing to pay for what I eat, for I have some money.”

The woman took no notice of this remark, but led the way into the kitchen of her house, which was as neat as wax, and very different in this respect from that of Mrs. Swikes. She put a great slice of ham into a pan, and put it on the fire; and in a moment it was hissing and sizzling, and sending forth a savory odor which tickled the senses of the hungry boy. When it was nearly done she put some cold potatoes into the pan, and fried them with the ham. She had already set the table; and, when the ham was cooked, she asked him to take his seat. She had coffee, and bread and butter, besides the other viands; and Wade could not remember when he had had such a nice breakfast. He astonished the lady by the magnitude of his appetite. He praised the food without stint; and the hostess was complimented by the quantity he ate.

When the meal was finished, the good lady would not take a cent of his dollar; and he thanked her with all his might.

CHAPTER XII.

WADE BROOKS MAKES A TRADE.

WADE BROOKS felt like a new boy. The breakfast was a meal to be remembered; for there was nothing like it in the past, and the future at the house of Obed Swikes was equally blank in prospect. His meals there were hardly better than the pigs had, and were often short at that.

“I hate to go back to the home of Obed Swikes,” said he to himself, as he walked from the house of the kind lady to the river. “I have to work like a dog, and sometimes I can’t get enough to eat; and he and the old woman say I don’t earn my salt. Both of them are growling at me all the time, and I have no peace of my life. They haven’t any claims on me; and they say I belong in the poorhouse. I don’t believe I should be any worse off if I were in the poorhouse. I shouldn’t have to work any harder, and I couldn’t be fed any worse. But then, I don’t like the name of it.”

By the time he reached the river, he had about made up his mind not to return to the house of Obed Swikes. It was a big thought; and, seating himself in the standing-room, he gave himself up to it. The

runaways were going to New York, and he had expected to go with them. He believed he could find work there, and earn his own living.

But how could he get to New York? He had the old boat, and it was not more than sixty miles distant. It might take him two days to get there; but the boat would certainly take him to his destination if he kept her going. The dollar Capt. Trustleton had given him would supply all the provision he needed, and even leave him something to spend after he reached the great city. The question was settled in the boy's mind.

Some folks in Midhampton would miss the old boat; but Wade felt that he had the best right to her, for she had belonged to his father. Hoisting the mainsail, he stood down the river; and, when he had passed the bridge, he set the jib. He expected to find a town before he reached the Sound, where he could buy the food for the cruise; but no such place appeared. Wade Brooks had heard of the Sound, but he had no clear idea what it was. He had been to school in the winter since he was old enough to do so, and had studied geography. He had seen the Sound on the map, and thought it was like a very wide river. He knew that he must go west to reach New York, and he had no doubt that he should find it.

The wind was fresh and fair, and in less than half an hour the "Mud-turtle" reached the mouth of the river. The Sound looked like the trackless ocean to

Wade, for at this point he could not see across it. He did not like the idea of going out on such a broad sea; for he had never sailed anywhere except on the river, and had never been out of Midhampton before. But he could keep near the shore, and if a storm came up he could put in at some of the towns he had seen on the map.

After he got out of the river, he found a point of land extended over a mile to the south, and had a light-house at the end of it. He doubled this cape, and found that a great bay stretched inland. It was seven or eight miles across the mouth of this bay, and he did not like to venture out so far. Besides, several vessels and a small steamboat were bound up the bay, which indicated that there was a large town at the head of it.

The water was alive with craft of all sorts farther out in the Sound; and, if the old sail-boat did break down, there were vessels enough near to save him. After he had run a couple of miles more, he could see the town at the head of the bay. He could just discern a light-house at the point where the bay began to be very narrow; and he headed for this, as all the other craft were doing. But the wind was dead ahead, and he had to beat all the way; but it was not more than three miles from him.

“What town is that?” asked Wade of a man in a boat loaded with oysters, which he was rowing towards the town, as the “Turtle” passed near him.

"That's the city of Bridgeport," replied the oyster man. "Don't you know where you are?"

"No, sir, I don't: I never was here before," answered Wade, with candor and simplicity. "I want to go to some place where I can get some crackers and things to eat."

"Where did you come from?"

"From Midhampton, up the river."

"Where are you bound?"

"To New York."

"If you are bound up to town, and will take my boat in tow, I will pilot you up. It's a crooked channel up to the city, and you will have a head wind part of the way," added the oysterman.

Wade agreed to this arrangement, and ran the "Turtle" alongside the oyster-boat. The man passed his painter to the stern of the sail-boat, and then took his place at the helm.

"Whose boat is this?" asked the new skipper, as he looked the "Mud-turtle" over with a critical eye.

"She belongs to me," replied Wade.

"You are rather young to own a boat," added the oysterman.

"If she don't belong to me, I don't know who owns her."

"Where did you get her?"

Wade had no secrets, and he related the history of the boat. The man wanted to know something more about the young boatman's history, and he

kept looking the boat over all the time as he asked question after question. Wade told his story without any reserve, except that he did not mention the fire.

"I don't see as that man has any claims upon you," said the pilot. "If he did not use you well, I don't blame you for leaving him."

"Obed Swikes said I belonged in the poorhouse; and he and his wife kept saying they should send me there," added Wade.

"What are you going to do in New York?" asked Loud; for that was his name.

"I expect to find work when I get there."

"What are you going to do with this boat?"

"I don't know: I hadn't thought of that," replied Wade blankly. And he did not think the boat was of much consequence any way.

"I think this boat will do me more good than she will you," said Loud, feeling his way to the subject that had been uppermost in his mind from the beginning.

"It don't seem to me that I should want to row that load of oysters as far as you have to go," replied Wade, though he did not yet see what the oysterman was driving at.

"You can't do any thing with the boat in New York," added Loud, looking into the locker astern of the tiller. "She isn't much of a boat; but you couldn't even sell her there, if you wanted to."

This was a new idea to the young boatman. It

had never occurred to him before, that there was any value in the old "Mud-turtle," which had been used in Midhampton by everybody who wanted her, without hire or even thanks. He saw that the man wanted to buy her for use in bringing in his oysters. She was just the thing for that. She was old; but she was still sound, and scarcely leaked at all. He was a New-England boy, and he had an instinct for trade; and he made up his mind that Loud should not get her for nothing.

"I should say that New York was a better place than this to sell a boat," said Wade, when the man began to run down the boat, and to make it appear that she was useless to her owner.

"I don't think so. They have so many nice boats here, that an old thing like this don't stand much chance."

"If she were only painted up, she would be as nice as any of them," replied Wade, who remembered how handsome he thought she was when his father had put her in first-rate order two or three years before he died.

"It would cost a good deal of money to fix her up; and I don't know as she is worth it. She will do to bring up oysters from the beds in; and, if you will sell her for any fair price, I should like to buy her," continued Loud, looking her over more carefully than before.

"I didn't think of selling her; but I will let her go, if you will give me what she's worth," said Wade,

deeming it wise not to appear too anxious to drive a trade.

“Well, what will you take for her?” asked Loud, in an indifferent way.

This was a hard question for Wade to answer; but he recalled a time when his father talked of selling the boat, and he had heard the conversation on the subject. Mr. Brooks had asked seventy-five dollars for the boat; but then she had just been painted and repaired.

“I will take fifty dollars for her,” replied Wade, after some hesitation; and this, he thought, would be a good figure at which to begin the trade.

“Oh, get out!” exclaimed Loud, with great contempt in his manner. “She is not worth half that.”

Wade did not think she was, but he did not say so: that was not the way to trade.

“I know my father would not sell her for less than seventy-five; but I didn’t want to be hard, and I made her cheap to you.”

“I should think you did,” said Loud with a laugh, — “fifty dollars for this old tub! I can buy a bigger and better boat here in Bridgeport for half the money.”

“Well, if you can, there isn’t any law to keep you from doing so,” added Wade good-naturedly.

“This boat will answer my purpose very well; and I thought, as she will be of no use to you, she might be bought cheap.”

“And so she can be: what will you give for her?”

“I made up my mind, if you would let her go for ten dollars, I should take her; but I didn't mean to give much more than that for her.”

“Oh, get out! ten dollars for this boat!” exclaimed Wade: “there is old iron enough to bring more than that.”

For an hour they haggled about the price. Wade saw that the oysterman wanted the boat, in spite of the indifference he tried to assume. Loud said there was some risk in buying a boat of a boy; but the trade was finally closed at twenty dollars. When they landed at the city, Loud went for the money, and paid Wade the cash, requiring him to sign a receipt for it.

Wade was glad to have the boat off his hands; and he would have sold her for ten dollars rather than keep her, if he could have got no more. Just now, with twenty dollars in his pocket, he was a wealthy young man; and he felt better off than the rich showman in the place where he was. But the boat was gone; and the question now was, how he should get to New York.

CHAPTER XIII.

TWO WRONGS DON'T MAKE A RIGHT.

WHILE Wade Brooks is resting his mind after the great trade he has made, let us follow his late companions back to Midhampton. Lon Trustleton had the feeling that all his fun had been nipped in the bud by Wade, when he took the money, which was to pay the expenses of the expedition to New York, from the place where Matt Swikes had put it. It is true, he blamed Matt for putting the wallet there, and thought he was a fool for doing so. He ought to have given it to him if he was afraid to keep it.

Then Matt had counted the money into parts, evidently to divide with him. He wondered why he had not given him his share, instead of sticking it in the bottom of the boat. Lon had no suspicion that Matt doubted his fairness in the matter, and that he might take all the funds from him; but this was the reason why Matt had put the money in what he considered a safe place.

The captured runaways had no chance to talk together till the train arrived at Midhampton, about nine o'clock. Capt. Trustleton was in favor, as before, of looking the facts squarely in the face. If

his son set the barn on fire, he wanted to know it; and though he did not want the boy sent to prison, or any thing of the kind, he was disposed to punish him severely for the crime, as well as to pay Mr. Garlick the loss he had sustained.

Obed Swikes was glad to get his money back. He was not willing to believe that Matt had any thing to do with burning the barn; but Capt. Trustleton insisted upon taking the boys to the house of Mr. Garlick, and having the matter investigated. Swikes reluctantly consented to the plan, and they went directly from the station to the farmer's house. The boys were left in one room, while their fathers talked the subject over in another.

"Here we are, Matt," said Lon, who did not appear to be at all sorry for his evil deeds: "our fun has been spoiled by Wade Brooks."

"I know it; and now we may be sent to the House of Correction for burning the barn," replied Matt.

"No danger of that," added Lon. "Your father will not let you be sent to any such place; and I know mine won't. They say money will do almost any thing."

"My father will not be willing to pay much money on my account."

"Yes, he will: he will pay all that is wanted to keep you out of the House of Correction," added Lon. "I am only sorry because we lost the good time we should have had in New York while the money lasted; and, when we came home, our folks

would be so glad to see us, that they wouldn't have said a word."

"I don't know about that; but every thing would have worked first-rate if it hadn't been for Wade Brooks, confound him!"

"Don't you think we can get hold of that money again, Matt?" asked Lon in a whisper.

"I don't know: very likely I can. My father thinks Wade took it."

"Wade will be back in the boat some time to-day; and he may steal it a second time, you know," added Lon, with a wink. "We must have that time in New York, anyhow."

"I'm willing, if we only get out of this scrape."

"We shall get out of this all right; but don't you make any blunders this time, as you did before," said the cautious Lon. "Don't answer any questions till you have thought about it. Stick to it that we had nothing to do with the fire. Your father does not know that you were out of the house before the fire; and I'm sure mine didn't. Say we did not come out till the fire woke us, and went to the boat after it was all over. They will not believe Wade's story, if we only stick to our text, and you don't put your foot into it again."

While these scamps were preparing for the worst, the trio in the other room were discussing the guilt of the boys. Capt. Trustleton called for the evidence that his boy had been concerned in setting the fire. Mr. Garlick had no evidence, except that he

had horsewhipped the two boys, and Lon had threatened to get even with him. No one had seen the boys in the vicinity of the barn, either before or after the fire.

“Do you intend to proceed against the boys on this testimony?” asked the captain rather sternly.

“I have not said I should proceed against them.”

“The boys both denied that they had any thing to do with the fire.”

“Of course they would deny it,” replied the farmer.

“You may question them; and, if there is any thing to implicate them, I shall be willing to do what is right. Before we call them in, there’s another question which needs a little discussion,” continued Capt. Trustleton.

“What’s that?” asked Mr. Garlick curiously.

“You whipped these boys most unmercifully,” replied the captain.

“They had no business to burn my barn, if I did,” said the farmer.

“That’s very true; but two wrongs do not make a right. If you had not flogged them, you would not have suspected them of burning your building; and if they did the deed, — which I don’t admit, — they did it because you whipped them.”

“You hadn’t no business to lick my boy,” added Swikes.

“Now, if there is to be any law about the fire, there must be some more about this flogging,” continued Capt. Trustleton.

“Do you mean to prosecute me for that, after I have had my property burned by these boys?” demanded Mr. Garlick.

“If my boy is prosecuted for burning the barn, I certainly shall prosecute you for flogging my son.”

“And I shall do it for licking my boy,” added Obed Swikes, who began to see his way out of the scrape in the light of the captain’s threat.

“That looks a little as though you meant to scare me out of it,” added Garlick.

“Not at all; and I don’t mean any thing of the kind,” replied the captain. “If these boys set the fire, they did it under strong provocation. You had no more right to flog them than I have to flog you. You took the law into your own hands, and so did the boys; and you have got the worst of it, Mr. Garlick. I would rather have my barn burned than my son flogged as you flogged him. I do not believe in flogging: I saw enough of it on board ship when I was a young man.”

“You seem to think it was right for your son to burn the barn because I whipped him for stealing my peaches,” said the farmer.

“I do not say that; but I have no doubt my son Alonzo, who was never flogged in his life before so far as I know, thought the burning of the barn could no more than atone for the flogging you gave him.”

“I did not say I meant to prosecute the boys,” replied Garlick, who doubtless found by this time that there were two sides to the question.

“What I say is not to be considered as a threat. If my boy is taken before the courts on the charge of firing your barn, I wish the people to know why he did it, if he did it at all,” answered Capt. Trustleton. “Now we will examine the boys, one at a time.”

Lon was called into the room first, and questioned by his father and the farmer. He adhered to his story so well that he puzzled his father, who was prepared to see him convicted. Matt told the same story, as they had agreed beforehand; though a shrewd lawyer would perhaps have caused them to make more slips than they did.

“You see there is no evidence, Mr. Garlick, though the whipping can all be proved,” said Capt. Trustleton.

“It is a hard case that my property should be burned up by a couple of boys,” complained Garlick.

“And it is a hard case that two boys should be flogged as those were; and I think it is harder than your case,” added the captain. “If each party is to take the law into his own hands, he is also to do as much mischief as he thinks will cover the wrong he has suffered.”

“I suppose I shall get my insurance; but it will not cover the loss into five or six hundred dollars,” suggested Garlick, with this hint at a compromise.

The captain would not take the hint, and said nothing at all about paying any money to have the matter hushed up; for it was all over town now.

The conference closed with nothing done. The captain went to see his lawyer, and Swikes went home. Mrs. Swikes was delighted to see her son; and she would not believe that Matt had done any thing wrong. She was sure that Wade Brooks had taken the money.

“You must take good care of it, now you’ve got it back,” said the female Swikes.

“I’m goin’ to put it just where it was before; and when Wade comes back to-day, he will never think of looking in the same place for it,” said Obed Swikes, chuckling at his own cunning, as he put the wallet back into the closet.

Matt wanted his breakfast, and so did his father. While Mrs. Swikes went down cellar to get something, her husband had to see to the horse in the barn; and Matt was alone in the kitchen for a few minutes. Placing a chair in front of the fireplace, he reached up, obtained the wallet, and put it in his pocket. He was not to be cheated out of his fun by Wade Brooks. He was careful to put the chair in its place this time; and when his mother came back he was just where she left him.

When breakfast was ready, farmer Swikes was called. He was in a very happy frame of mind. His money had been restored; and when Wade returned he would get that dollar out of him, and it would pay the fares.

CHAPTER XIV.

WADE BROOKS'S FRIEND.

WADE BROOKS walked along the piers by the water, feeling like a young man with twenty dollars in his pocket. Presently he came to a steamer that was larger than any he had seen before; for he had never looked upon any thing larger than the tug-boat that sometimes came up the river. She was quite a curiosity to him, and he stopped to examine her. Then he saw a sign which indicated that the boat was bound to New York. This would exactly meet his views, for he was going to that great city. He would go in her if the fare was not so great as to ruin him.

On inquiry, he found that he could obtain a deck passage for a dollar; and this would be cheaper than to walk, for he would have to pay for his food on the way. But the boat did not start till late at night, and would reach her destination early in the morning. He had time, therefore, to explore the place, which he did very thoroughly. As he had never seen even a small city before, he was deeply interested in this one.

An noon he came across a restaurant where "meals

at all hours " were served, and he went in. The bill of fare was rather perplexing; for, though he had twenty-one dollars in his pocket, he was not inclined to spend it any faster than it was necessary to do so. "Baked Beans, 10 cents," seemed to fit his case best; and he made his dinner of this substantial diet. He wandered about all the rest of the day, and went on board of the steamer about dark. He was tired after the day's work, and the mate told him he might make his bed upon some bales of wool. He went to sleep; and his slumbers were so sound that he did not even know when the boat started. He did not wake till the steamer was fast to the wharf in New York. The sun was shining brightly when he turned out, and he had no suspicion that the boat had stirred from the place where she was the night before.

"What time are we going to start?" asked Wade, when he saw the good-natured mate about his work.

"Start? where do you want to go now?" replied the mate, who saw how it was with the passenger.

"To New York. I thought you told me the boat would leave last night," added Wade.

"Well, she won't leave again till to-night," said the man, with a laugh. "You must have slept very sound, my lad, for the boat did start last night: we have been in New York more than an hour."

"Is that so?" exclaimed Wade, looking out at the forward part of the boat.

"That's so, my boy; and you must look out

sharper than that in New York, or the swindlers will skin you alive."

"I guess I can take care of myself," said Wade confidently. "I'm much obliged to you for looking out for me as you have, Mr. Mate."

"Take care of yourself, my boy: there are a great many bad places in a big city like this."

Wade Brooks went on shore. He was bewildered by the sights that met his gaze; and all he could do was to stare at the wonders that surrounded him. He walked till he thought it was about time for breakfast, and then he returned to a restaurant he had noticed near the steamboat-landing. The prices he saw posted at the door of the place suited him, and he went in. Fish-balls were only ten cents, with bread and butter: though he found the quantity was hardly up to his standard. He was not used to high living, and the quality was not so important to him. It was a good deal better than he had ever had at Obed Swikes's.

Opposite to him at the table sat a very seedy-looking man. He wore black clothes, and had worn them about out. He looked at Wade several times: he even seemed to be taking his measure. Like Wade, he was eating fish-balls; but he did not seem to enjoy the meal as did the boy from the country.

"You are a stranger in the city," said the man, after he had looked Wade over to his satisfaction.

"Yes, sir: I got here this morning in the steamboat from Bridgeport," replied Wade, who did not



Baked Beans 10 cts
Fish Balls 10 cts
Clam Chowder 10 cts
Beef Stew 10 cts
Broiled Tripe 15
Fried Sausages 15

Hulled Corn

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think it at all strange that the gentleman should speak to him.

“Do you live in Bridgeport?” continued the seedy individual, as though he intended to push his inquiries to some extent.

“No, sir: I never was there till yesterday; and I have always lived in the country, and worked on the farm,” replied Wade, perfectly willing to tell all about himself.

“I see: farmer’s boy; nice healthy occupation,” added the stranger. “Have you got tired of farming?”

“No, sir: but I got tired of the way I had to live. The folks where I worked were meaner than swill-pie; and, when I couldn’t stand it any longer, I came away.”

“What’s your name, my boy?” asked the man.

“Wade Brooks.”

“My name is Caleb Klucker; and I am one of the missionaries who go about this great city to look after the sick and the stranger,” replied the man very solemnly. “You may think my clothing is not very good for one engaged in such a responsible employment; but I cannot afford to spend any money on myself, when the sick and needy are so many. I wear these poor clothes, that more of the hungry may be fed.”

“Look after the sick and the stranger,” repeated Wade, who did not clearly understand Mr. Klucker’s business. “Do you find any?”

“Plenty of them. This very morning I found a poor woman who was sick in consumption; and I gave her all the money I had, except ten cents to pay for this miserable meal.”

“That was doing the handsome thing,” added Wade, who concluded he had come across one of the saints he had read about, but had never seen. “Do you find any strangers?”

“Hundreds who come to the great city with no friends to assist or advise them,” answered Mr. Klucker with enthusiasm; and Wade thought his whole soul was in his work. “I have found you, for one.”

“But I don’t want any help: I think I can take care of myself.”

“So all these simple-minded country boys think,” added the missionary, shaking his head. “The temptations of the great city will beset you behind and before.”

“Well, sir, I think I can take care of myself in the face of all of them.”

“Perhaps you can: you look like a bright, smart boy, who knows more about the world than most of those who come to the city.”

Wade thought Mr. Caleb Klucker was a knowing man, and knew what was what.

“What are you going to do in this city, Wade?” asked the missionary.

“I am going to find a place to go to work. If I can get something to do, I can take care of myself till the cows come home.”

“Will you let me look at your testimonials?” said Mr. Klucker, in an off-hand way.

“My what?”

“Your testimonials.”

“I don't know what you mean. I haven't got any thing of that sort about me, as I know of.”

“I mean your recommendations, — a paper from your minister, or some other good man, saying that you are a good boy,” Mr. Klucker explained.

“I haven't got any. I left, as I told you, in something of a hurry. I came to Bridgeport in a sail-boat which was my father's; and I hadn't any time to go to the minister for the paper.”

“You will find it very hard to find a place to work without a recommendation,” added the missionary, shaking his head very sorrowfully, as though his heart was touched at the friendless condition of the youth. “But what did you do with the boat in which you came to Bridgeport?”

“I came across a man that wanted to buy her; and I thought she wasn't of much use to me, so I sold her,” replied Wade frankly.

“I suppose you had to sell her for less than half her value,” said Klucker, who seemed to be much interested in the boat, as well as in her late owner.

“She was an old boat, and wasn't worth much; but I got twenty dollars for her; and I thought that was doing pretty well with her.”

“Very well indeed, under the circumstances. I see that you are a wide-awake young man, and know

what you are about," said Mr. Klucker, with a patronizing smile. "But I am sorry you have no testimonials, for you will need them in order to get a place."

"I can soon show anybody that wants to hire a hand what I can do," replied Wade confidently.

"But people will not take strange boys into their houses and shops without testimonials: they are afraid such boys will steal. But I feel an interest in you, and it is part of my business to look up just such cases as yours," added the benevolent Mr. Klucker. "I am going to the rooms of our association; and, if you will go with me, I will see what can be done for you. I am afraid you will be robbed of your money, and then you will be a beggar about the streets till you find work."

"I guess I can take care of my money," replied Wade.

"Twenty dollars is a large sum of money for a boy to have; and there are a great many wicked people in this great city, who live by plundering the stranger within its gates. For aught you know, you may have lost your money now."

It was a startling suggestion; and Wade thrust his hand deep down into his pocket, to see if the money was safe. He drew out an old wallet which had once belonged to his father, and showed it to his friend.

"It is all right, you see," said Wade with a smile.

"I see the wallet is, but there may be no money in it," added Mr. Klucker.

“Nobody could get the money out of the wallet while it was in my pocket,” added Wade.

“Such things are often done; and you had better see that the money is safe.”

Wade exhibited the bills with a look of triumph.

“It isn't safe for a boy to carry so much money around with him,” continued the missionary. “There are plenty of sharpers who can get it away from you so adroitly that you will not know when it is taken. Don't you think you had better let me take charge of it for you?”

“I think I can manage it for myself,” replied Wade, as he restored the wallet to his pocket.

“I think you had better put it in our savings bank: you can have a book, and draw it out as you want it.”

Wade knew about savings banks; and he liked the idea. Mr. Klucker conducted his young friend to such a bank, though it did not seem to be at “the rooms of our association.” A long string of depositors was at the window where the money was passed in; and they had to wait some time,—so long that Mr. Klucker's patience was exhausted.

CHAPTER XV.

A NEW YORK SAINT.

“**R**EALLY, I can’t wait so long,” said the kind friend of Wade Brooks. “But I know the people in the bank; and, if you will give me the money, they will do the business at once.”

This looked like a reasonable plan, and Wade felt quite willing to adopt it.

“I haven’t twenty dollars left to put into the bank,” said he, taking the wallet from his pocket.

“I must keep some to pay for what I want to eat.”

“You can draw out what you want at any time, and you had better put in nearly all you have,” suggested Mr. Klucker.

“I have twenty dollars, all but twenty cents; and I guess I’ll put in eighteen,” replied Wade.

“Very well: it will be safe here, and you can get it when you want it,” said the missionary, in the most encouraging tones.

Wade gave him the money; and he moved off to the other end of the banking-room, as though he were going behind the partition that separated the bank-officers from the public. Wade looked in at the window to see him, if he could; but he did not

appear. The missionary seemed to be a long time doing the business, and getting his book; and Wade waited half an hour with what patience he had. All the people who had been in the line when he came into the room had done their business, and had gone, though their places were filled by others.

Wade waited another half-hour; and then the attention of the cashier was directed to him as one who had waited a long time. Strange as it may seem, the country boy did not suspect any thing wrong; for one who had given all his money but ten cents to a poor sick woman, and who was employed by "our association" to look out for the sick and the stranger, could not steal his money.

"What are you waiting for, young man?" called the cashier, from the window.

"I am waiting for my book," replied Wade.

"What book was that?"

"Mr. Klucker took my money in there about an hour ago."

"Who?" asked the cashier, beginning to take an interest in the matter.

"Mr. Caleb Klucker. He said he knew you in there, and he would get a book for me without waiting so long," answered Wade, who thought it a little odd that they did not know the name.

"I don't know any such person; and I am the only one that takes deposits," replied the cashier. "How much money did you give him to take in here?"

“Eighteen dollars, sir.”

“Did any one come in here from the front?” asked the cashier, turning to the clerks in the office.

No one had come in from the front, or from anywhere else. One of the assistants had seen a seedy-looking man pass out at the rear door, which was little used.

“I am sorry for you, young man; but it is plain enough that you have been robbed of your money by a swindler,” said the cashier, shaking his head. “You will never see your eighteen dollars again.”

“But Mr. Klucker was a missionary; and he went about looking up the sick and the stranger,” protested Wade, confounded by the explanation of his long waiting.

“Especially for the stranger,” added the cashier, with a significant smile. “You should have handed your money in at this window, and then it would have been all right.”

“I thought this man was a New York saint,” added Wade, with about all the pluck taken out of him.

“No: he was a New York sinner.”

“But he was going to get me a place to work, and I never thought that he could be a thief.”

“That is just what he was,” said the cashier, resuming his work.

“But where shall I find Mr. Klucker?” asked Wade, not yet reconciled to the loss of his eighteen dollars.

“You will not find him: he will diligently keep out of your way during the rest of your stay in New York. You can go to the police; but I think it will do no good,” answered the cashier, with more indifference in his manner than a boy who has lost eighteen dollars likes to see.

Wade Brooks hung round the bank till noon, in the hope that Mr. Klucker had been slandered by the cashier, and that he would return to restore his money. But the missionary was not one of that sort of men: when he got any money into his hands, no matter by what means, he made a business of holding on to it. He did not show himself again. Wade left the bank with a heavy heart. Was that the kind of saints they had in New York?

The unhappy boy from the country walked down the street, looking at every man he met, in the hope that he might see the swindler; but he did not. He continued his walk till he reached the cheap restaurant where he had eaten his breakfast. He went in, and asked the man at the counter if he could tell him who the man was that he had met at the table.

“His name is Jeremy Diddler,” replied the man, with a coarse laugh.

“Can you tell me where he lives?” added Wade, glad to learn the name of the New York saint.

“He lives on green countrymen most of the time,” laughed the man.

“But I mean, where is his house?”

"His house! he don't have any house except when he is boarded at the county hotel."

"Where is that?" asked Wade blankly.

"It is on an island in East River; but he is not boarding there just now," said the man, winking at a waiter who was listening to the conversation.

"Can you tell me where I shall be likely to find him?" asked the unhappy Wade.

"I cannot; but you can inquire for him at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and they will tell you whether he is there or not," said the keeper of the restaurant, winking again at the waiter.

Wade wanted to know where the Fifth Avenue Hotel was, and was told so that he could find it.

"I say, sonny, have you been boarding that dead beat?" inquired the keeper.

"Boarding what?"

"The fellow you have been asking about."

"I have not been boarding anybody: I don't keep a boarding-house. I let him take eighteen dollars of mine to put in the savings bank, and get me a book; and I haven't seen him since. And now I want to find him."

"When you do find him, I want you to let me know, for it will be a thing worth knowing," laughed the keeper.

"You needn't laugh at me," said Wade, a little hurt; for it seemed like laughing at a funeral to him, after he had lost all the boat had brought except two dollars.

“Served you right, sonny; and, if the lesson you have learned costs you only eighteen dollars, you bought it cheap,” added the keeper. “Some of the countrymen who come here lose hundreds of dollars in just the way you lost your money: so you got off cheap.”

“It wasn’t my fault, for I thought he was a missionary,” Wade explained.

“So he is, — a missionary to enlighten countrymen who will trust their money in the hands of such dead beats,” chuckled the keeper. “You can inquire at the Fifth Avenue Hotel for him.”

The man turned to attend to a customer; and Wade retreated into the street, for being laughed at was almost as bad as being robbed of his money. Near the restaurant he met a policeman. Klucker had told him what the man in the uniform was, and had explained to him a great many other things, in answer to his questions, on the way to the bank. He told his story to the policeman; but he treated the matter very lightly, and candidly told him he would never see his money again. But he went back to the restaurant with him, and went through the form of asking a great many questions; but nothing came of his investigation.

Wade tramped up to the bank again. He went in, and asked if Mr. Klucker, or Mr. Diddler as the keeper of the restaurant had called him, had been at the place since he left. He had not been there; and the cashier smiled when he told him so. The poor

boy could not see why everybody, even the policeman, was disposed to laugh at him. He felt bad enough, without having folks make fun of him. It was no laughing matter. The man in the restaurant had told him to take a horse-car at the Astor House, which would carry him to the Fifth Avenue Hotel. He easily found the horse-cars; but he did not feel able to invest five cents in a ride, and he decided to walk, using the cars as his guide.

It was a long tramp, and he stopped so many times on the way to look up the cars that were marked "Fifth Avenue," that he did not reach his destination till the middle of the afternoon. In spite of his gloomy state of mind, he could not help stopping to admire the squares and the wonderful buildings, and to gaze upon the vast throng of people that filled the streets. He was amazed at the hotel, which he had supposed was something like the tavern in Midhampton. It was a palace, compared with any thing he had ever seen before. As he had never hesitated to enter the tavern when he wished to do so, he did not fear to go into the hotel.

He was bewildered by the grandeur and magnitude of the establishment. He paused at the office, and looked at the spruce clerks behind the counter. He wondered if it would be safe to speak to one of them; but he saw others do so, and he determined to make the attempt. The diamonds in their shirt-bosoms were very large; but they could not more than eat him.

“Is there a man by the name of Mr. Caleb Klucker stopping here?” he ventured to ask.

“Caleb Klucker,” repeated one of the clerks, turning to the other, and laughing.

“That is what he said his name was; but another man told me it was Jeremy Diddler,” added Wade, fearing that he might have given the wrong name.

“Jeremy Diddler! Oh, yes, he is always here!” exclaimed the clerk.

But what was the man laughing at? Wade had said nothing funny, that he was aware of; and these clerks did not know that he had been gouged out of eighteen dollars.

“Do you wish to see Mr. Diddler?” asked the clerk politely.

“I do want to see him,” replied Wade decidedly.

The clerk snapped a bell on the marble counter.

“Show this young man to No. 942,” he added to the servant who answered it.

Wade followed him, as told to do.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

WADE followed the servant up the stairs; and this fellow seemed to be laughing too. What had got into them all? He had done nothing to make them laugh. The people in the hotel seemed to know Jeremy Diddler, but not Caleb Klucker. If the fellow was a rogue, as Wade believed he was by this time, very likely he had two names.

Wade followed his conductor to the very top of the house; and it seemed to him he had never been so near heaven before. Then the man led him by devious winding ways, through long passages and halls, till he thought he had walked half a mile.

“How much farther are you going?” asked Wade, unable to forget the laugh of the clerks and the servant, which seemed to have something to do with the distance he had travelled.

“It isn’t more nor a mile furdur,” replied the Irish waiter.

“A mile!” exclaimed Wade, lost in wonder again at the immense size of the hotel. “It will take us all the rest of the day to get to the room.”

“Faith, it will, and half of the night.”

“How many stories high is this hotel?”

“Only thirteen.”

“Thirteen!”

“Yes; and the last place I lived, the house was twenty-one.”

The fellow chuckled so that Wade was afraid he was lying. He did not believe any hotel could be twenty-one stories high.

“Rather high houses,” said he coolly, “but not so high as they might be. The tavern in Midhampton, where I come from, is thirty-two stories high.”

“Spake the truth, man!”

“I guess my story is as true as yours.”

“Wait here a minute,” said the man, halting at a narrow passage-way; and Wade thought it looked very like one he had passed twice before in his tour in the upper regions of the hotel. “I will go to the room, and see if the gentleman is within.”

Wade did wait a minute, then five minutes; and then half an hour. The laughing seemed to be explained. The clerks had been making game of him. They had sent him on a wild-goose chase. He did not believe that Mr. Diddler was in the hotel, though the clerk said he was always there. He walked through the long passage-way, looking at the numbers on the doors: there were none as high as 942. Indeed, he could find none half as big. He kept walking till he came to what he thought was a closet, with a gas-light burning in it. A man was standing at the door.

“Are you going down?” asked the man, as Wade looked into the thing.

“That’s what I want to do,” replied the wanderer, who was wondering whether he could find his way down.

“Jump in, then,” added the attendant.

Wade began to suspect that this was some new trick, and he looked very cautiously into the closet. Then he concluded that it was not a closet at all. It had seats all around it like the depot omnibus in Midhampton, and was carpeted and cushioned like a fine parlor. At a venture, he concluded to go in, and he seated himself on the velvet divan. The man closed the door, and pulled a wire rope which ran through the thing. Then Wade thought the bottom was dropping out of the concern, but he soon found the whole affair was descending; and in a minute or two the attendant pulled the wire again, and it stopped. When the door opened, he found he was near the office where the clerks had fooled him. He was astonished to see how quick he had come down; and this was his first experience in an elevator, for he had never even heard of such a thing.

“Did you find him?” asked the clerk, when he showed himself in the office.

“I didn’t find him,” replied Wade indignantly; “and you knew very well I should not find him.”

“I think he was out,” added the clerk, looking very serious now. “Did you go to No. 542?”

“No, sir: we went to No. 942, where you sent us.”

“No, — 542. I think the bell-boy did not understand me. Try again; and I think you will find him this time. You can go up in the elevator.”

Though Wade was satisfied that the clerk wanted to fool him again, he thought he would take another ride in that machine. Another bell-boy was called, and directed to show the young man to 542.

“And, young man, you must open the door, and go right in. Don’t stop to knock; for Mr. Diddler owes money to various people, and sometimes he will not answer when he is summoned. Go in without ceremony.”

Again the boy from the country ascended to the upper regions of the hotel: and, without going far, his conductor led him to the room on the door of which was the number which the clerk had named last. The bell-boy did not wait, but left him to carry out the instructions he had received in the office. Wade was in no hurry to open the door. Perhaps Mr. Klucker, who was not much of a saint after all, might be ugly: he might show fight. But Wade meant to stick to him till he had got his money back. Placing his hand on the knob of the door, he hesitated a moment, and wished he had a club, or something to defend himself with if the missionary showed fight.

After he had braced his nerves up to the sticking-point, he turned the knob, and shoved the door wide open, so that Mr. Klucker could not shut it before he had time to enter. It was not fastened, as it

might have been, and yielded to the first force he applied.

If ever Wade Brooks was astonished, it was when he opened that door, and saw who were in the room. He was prepared to find the New York saint, and no one else. But in that room, considering the size of it, saints were scarce, and sinners plenty. At the table in the middle of the chamber sat two boys, counting a pile of money, or rather the two piles of money into which they had divided the one. The two boys were Lon Trustleton and Matt Swikes.

The reader is not half so much astonished as Wade Brooks was when he saw his late fellow-voyagers in the "Mud-turtle," settled in a room in the Fifth Avenue Hotel; for he knows that the young rascals had not given up their "good time" in the great city, and that Matt had obtained possession again of the wallet and its contents. After breakfast, Matt had looked up his companion in crime; and, when they had laid their plans, they walked to the next station north of Midhampton, which was not the way to go to New York direct, and took a train. As something had been said by Wade about going to New York, they were afraid of being followed if they went the other way. By a roundabout route, they reached New York, and had just arrived. Lon wanted to take charge of the money this time; but the best Matt would do was to divide, and they had made two piles of the money that remained after paying their expenses so far.

Lon had often heard his father speak of the Fifth Avenue Hotel; and as he saw a stage at the station, with the name upon it, he decided to go there, though he had no idea what sort of a house it was. The clerk in the office did not seem to think every thing was regular about the boys, as they had no baggage; but Lon was well dressed, and they were willing to pay in advance. He was disposed to make fun of them; and it was a practical joke on his part, to send the country boy to the chamber of the new arrivals.

“Wade Brooks!” exclaimed Lon, as the boy of all work sprang into the room. “How under the canopy came you here?”

“I did not expect to find you here,” replied Wade, when he had recovered from his surprise enough to speak.

“Then you were not looking for us?”

“No, I was not: I was looking for another man,” replied Wade.

“Who?”

“His name is Jeremy Diddler,” answered Wade, with his usual candor and simplicity.

“Jeremy Diddler!” exclaimed Lon, who knew the individual by reputation. “Are you a fool, Wade Brooks?”

“I don’t think I am. The man’s other name is Caleb Klucker.”

“They are making fun of you, Wade,” said Lon. “What have you been doing since I left you yesterday morning?”

Wade told the story just as it was, — that he had sold the boat for twenty dollars, and the money had been taken from him by a fellow whose name was Jeremy Diddler. Lon laughed outright.

“Jeremy Diddler is a name given to any one that swindles folks out of their money, you ninny!” said the more experienced Lon. “I didn’t think you was such a fool.”

“Is that it?” added Wade, laughing at his own foolishness, and seeing now what the clerks had been laughing at. “I’m glad to know it; and I see that is your name, Lon.”

“None of your sauce, Wade Brooks,” said Lon, beginning to look savage.

“I’m not afraid of you now; and I had just as lief fight as not. I see you and Matt have swindled Obed Swikes out of his two hundred dollars again; and I think you and he both will fit the meaning you give to the name. There’s the old wallet on the table; and they can’t say I took it this time.”

Lon looked at Matt, and Matt looked at Lon. They did not seem to like the situation, for Wade had caught them in the act of counting the money. It was no use to deny it this time; and he had only to tell the clerk, in order to get them into trouble.

CHAPTER XVII.

AT THE LODGING-HOUSE.

“WELL, Wade Brooks, what are you going to do about it?” demanded Lon, when he had considered the situation.

“I don’t know what I shall do about it,” replied Wade; and he spoke the truth. “You come here to have a time, as I knew you meant to do before.”

“If you ever tell anybody what you have found out, I’ll flog you within an inch of your life!” said Lon savagely.

“I’ll risk it; and, if you want to begin now, I’m ready. It isn’t likely I shall ever see anybody to speak to about it; but, if you’re going to lick me, I’ll go out of my way to tell,” said Wade stoutly; and he was confident, after their experience in the boat, he could thrash Lon every time.

“Don’t make a row with him, Lon,” said the more prudent Matt. “Let’s make trade with him.”

“What do you mean by a trade?” demanded Lon.

“He can tell all he knows, if he has a mind to; and then where shall we be?” replied Matt.

Lon did not like the idea any better than Matt; and he allowed him to tell what he meant.

“You have lost the money you got for the boat, have you, Wade?” asked Matt.

“I lost eighteen dollars of it, and I have only a dollar and eighty cents left; and I shall soon eat that up,” replied Wade gloomily.

“I will give you ten dollars, and Lon shall give you the same, if you will agree not to say a word to any one about us, not even to Lon’s father or mine, if you should happen to see either or both of them,” said Matt, in soft tones. “That will be twenty dollars, more than you had before.”

“Do you mean to give me the money you stole from your father?” asked Wade.

“We haven’t any other money,” replied Matt. “We didn’t steal it: who said any thing about stealing?”

“You can’t deny that you stole that money from your father; and I don’t see what he was thinking about, that he didn’t put it in a place where you couldn’t get it.”

“Don’t say any thing more about stealing, Wade. That’s not the way to call it. But say whether you will take up with my offer.”

“I won’t take up with it: I won’t have any thing to do with any money you stole. I’m not a thief; and I’ve heard your father say that the receiver is as bad as the thief,” replied Wade decidedly.

“I knew it would be so,” added Lon, disgusted with the idea of compromising with a fellow like Wade Brooks.

“I don't want to talk about such a thing;” and the temptation was so great, that Wade was afraid to think of it. “I guess I'll be going now.”

Wade backed out at the open door, and neither of the runaways attempted to detain him, though Lon repeated his threat. Matt was alarmed; but Lon thought that the fear of a thrashing which he had promised the boy of all work would prevent him from saying any thing to the people in the hotel, though he would be likely to tell the whole truth when they all went home.

Wade walked to the elevator, thinking what he should do. He did not like Lon's threat; and knew that his father was even then worrying about his son. When the car came along on its way down, he got into it, and a moment later he was at the office. He had made up his mind to leave the hotel without saying any thing more to any one, for he had been laughed at enough for one day. But the joking clerk was not inclined to let him escape, at least without a little more quizzing.

“Did you find your friend, young man?” asked the joker, with a smile and a wink at his fellow-clerk.

“Yes, sir; I found him: in fact, I found two of the name I gave you,” replied Wade readily.

“I'm glad you did: I thought Mr. Diddler must be in that room if he was anywhere in the house.”

“He's there; and I think his father, whose name is not Diddler, would like to hear from him.”

“Did you find that you knew the boys in that room?” asked the clerk, who had had many doubts in regard to taking them into the house.

“I knew them both the moment I set eyes on them.”

“Who are they?”

“One of them is Matt Swikes, and the other is Lon Trustleton. Both of them came from Midhampton. Lon threatened to lick me if I said any thing about them, and I want him to try it on.”

“Trustleton! Then he must be the son of Capt. Trustleton of Midhampton,” added the clerk.

“That’s what he is, every time,” replied Wade, who felt that he had no right to keep still when these boys were running away with money they had stolen: besides, he wanted to know about the licking Lon was to give him.

“And who are you, young man?” asked the clerk.

“My name is Wade Brooks; and I used to live in Midhampton.”

“Does your father live there?”

“I have no father or mother, or any relations that I know of.”

“But whom did you run away from?”

“Nobody has any claim on me; and I am my own master,” replied Wade decidedly. “Can I get any work about this house? I want something to do.”

“Nothing here. Have you told me the truth about the other two boys?”

“Of course I have; and you’ll find it so, if you look into the matter. But I’m going now,” continued Wade, moving towards the entrance.

The clerk did not offer to detain him, and Wade reached the street. It was no use to do any thing more about the eighteen dollars: he gave it up, and tried to be as resigned as possible to the heavy loss. It was just his luck. He began to feel the necessity of something to eat again, for he had not tasted food since he breakfasted with Mr. Klucker. But he walked to the place where he had taken his morning meal, for he thought his money would not last long if he patronized the restaurants in the Fifth Avenue.

The keeper asked him some questions about his search for the missionary; but it was only to make fun of him, and he gave short answers to him. He spent ten cents upon a plate of baked beans; for this was one of the cheap dishes, and he could not indulge in chops and beefsteaks. He wondered where he should pass the night. He had not been in a bed for two nights, and he was beginning to feel very tired. He asked the keeper of the restaurant where he could find a cheap lodging, and was directed to a place where he could get the luxury of a bed for twenty-five cents. He went to it; and, though it was cheap, it was better than he had had in the garret of Obed Swikes. There were six beds in the room; and, as it was only half-past seven, he had the choice of them.

“My money is almost gone in one day; but it is

just my luck," said he to himself as he got into the bed. "It will cost me fifty or sixty cents a day to live, the best way I can fix it; and it will only last me a couple of days more. What shall I do then, if I don't get something to do?"

It was a hard question to answer; and, while he was thinking about it, he went to sleep. He did not wake till daylight in the morning. He saw that all the other beds were occupied; but he did not care to get up at that early hour, for he had not to go out to the barn and take care of the cattle. But he was fully rested, and he could not go to sleep again. He lay as long as he could; and then got up and dressed himself, being the first to leave the room.

The place where he had lodged was a cheap hotel; and he looked at the bill of fare in the restaurant. He found the prices were about the same as at the place where he had taken his meals the day before; and he called for fish-balls, — the cheapest dish on the bill. He got more of them than at the other place, and he was well satisfied with the establishment. He even informed the proprietor, who was on duty behind the counter, that he should patronize his house while he staid in New York. He thought this announcement, with a compliment which he prefixed to it, would please the man, as doubtless it did, till a circumstance appeared which spoiled its effect.

Wade's bill was ten cents, — he had paid for his lodging the night before, as the rule of such places

requires, — and he put his hand into his pocket to take out his wallet. He did take it out; but, to his intense astonishment, he found there was not a single cent in it: all the rest of his money was gone. It had evidently been stolen from him while he was asleep. He had hung his trousers over the head of the bed, and in the pocket of this garment was his earthly treasure. It was only one dollar and thirty-five cents, but it was all he had.

“My money is all gone,” said Wade mournfully.

“Gone! You mean that you haven’t got any,” said the landlord.

“But I had a dollar and thirty-five cents when I went to bed in your house last night, and now I haven’t a single cent.”

“That has been played on me so many times, that I know all about it. I should say a hundred such fellows have been robbed in my house within a year. I don’t believe you had any money,” said the landlord coldly.

“How could I pay for my lodging if I had not?” asked Wade meekly.

“You had no business to order breakfast, if you hadn’t the money to pay for it,” growled the man.

“I thought I had money, or I should not.”

“That won’t go down,” added the landlord.

“It is the truth; but I will come and pay you just as soon as I get some money.”

“I guess not,” added the proprietor of the hotel, reaching over the counter, and snatching Wade’s

cap from his head. "When you pay the bill, you shall have your cap again. You can go now."

"I can't go out without any cap," protested Wade.

"You try it, and see if you can't. I'll bet a dollar you can; and, if you don't do it in half a minute, my right boot will help you on your way."

It was of no use to argue the case with such a man as that; and the poor boy left the little hotel sadder than he had ever been before in his life. He had no cap on his head; but no one seemed to notice the fact. He was near the steamboat-landings; and presently he saw a ragged boy get a job to carry a bag belonging to a traveller. He took the suggestion; and, going nearer to the pier, he appealed to every man and woman he met for a job to carry baggage, and at last he was so lucky as to get one. He left the bag at a hotel near Broadway; and the traveller gave him ten cents, with which he considered himself richly paid.

With the money in his hand, — for he dared not trust it in his pocket, — he hastened back to the cheap hotel. The landlord gave him his cap when he handed him his money.

"I thought you would find some money if I kept your cap," said he. "I have half a mind to keep it to punish you for lying to me, and saying you had no money."

"I made the ten cents carrying a bag for a passenger," pleaded Wade, as he left the place.

He went back to the steamboat-landing to see if he could not get another job.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A NIGHT ADVENTURE.

“JUST my luck!” exclaimed Wade, when he was in the street. “Not a single cent left! To think there should be any one in that little mean hotel to take a dollar and thirty-five cents from a poor boy like me!”

But it was no use to complain. He had made ten cents that morning, and he might do a large business of this kind. But all the passengers from the steamers had gone to their hotels or elsewhere; and he walked along to one of the large ferries that bring travellers across from the railroads on the Jersey shore. He happened to hit quite a crowd of them, and he began to offer his services. He had spoken to half a dozen, though without success, when three stout fellows came up to him.

“Out of this, country!” said one of them, with a threatening demonstration. “If you don’t get out of this, you will get a crack on the sconce.”

He could not exactly see how the fellows knew he was from the country; but, as it was a fact, he was not disposed to raise any issue on the question. But he wanted to know by what right they ordered him

away from this locality. He thought he had as good right there as they had.

“What’s that for?” he asked; and he did not like the idea of fighting three of them as big as himself.

“Sure we have the license to carry baggage from this place; and we won’t let the business be taken from us by no countryman,” replied the spokesman of the party.

“You have a license! What’s that?” added Wade.

“Don’t you know what a license is?” hooted the fellow. “Don’t the city give us the right to carry baggage from this ferry?”

“I don’t know. Does it?”

“Faith, if you’re not out of this in half a minute, we’ll show you how it is;” and the speaker shook his dirty fists in Wade’s face.

“If you have a license, of course I won’t meddle with your business,” replied Wade prudently. “But that’s just my luck.”

Wade walked up and down the street, looking for a job, but nothing could he find. He went into shops of every kind: he applied at the barges and oyster-boats, and went on board of the vessels. No one wanted a boy. Those whom he addressed would hardly give him a civil answer; and, if he said any thing after they had given him the usual short answer, he was driven away with oaths and abuse.

At noon there was no dinner for him, for he had not a cent to pay for the meal; and he continued to wander about the city, asking for work, till the mid-

dle of the afternoon, when he was so tired that he could walk no farther. He was hungry too, but he knew no better where to get a supper than a dinner. He had been tramping up and down Broadway; and he came to Union Square, where he was very glad to sit an hour, and rest himself.

When he was rested, he walked to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, for he wanted to know what had become of Lon and Matt. He explored the lower part of the house, but he saw nothing of his late fellow-voyagers on the river. They might be in their room; and, when he presented himself at the elevator, the attendant, who had seen him the day before, did not object to his taking passage in the car; and in a minute or two he was at the top of the house. He went to the room which Lon and Matt had occupied, and knocked; but no one seemed to be in the apartment. What had become of them?

He returned to the elevator, which had not yet descended, and took a seat in the car. He was rather sorry not to find the two runaways, for he was thinking seriously of returning to Midhampton. It was better to go back to Obed Swikes's, and live as he had before, than to starve in the great city. As it was, he did not see how he could get back. He could not start on an empty stomach, and expect to walk sixty or seventy miles.

"What has become of the two fellows that slept in No. 542?" asked Wade of the elevator-man.

"The two that came yesterday? Faith, there has

been great looking for those same boys," replied the man. "This morning the father of one of them came to look for them, for the clerk telegraphed to him that his son was at the hotel; but they couldn't find them. The bed wasn't slept in last night; and they must have left in the evening."

Wade thought he understood it. After he had seen them, they were afraid to stay any longer, and had left soon after he had gone. He couldn't make peace with them, and get something to eat. He walked about the lower part of the hotel, and among other places visited the bar-room. On the counter he saw some crackers and cheese. He concluded they were placed there to eat; and, as the man in charge was reading a book at the farther end of the counter, he helped himself to as much of the coveted provision as he dared to take. He sat down in a corner, and ate it.

He was quite faint with his long fast; and the food, light as it was, restored him. A servant looked at him half a dozen times, and then told him loafers were not allowed about the house. Poor Wade had never considered himself a loafer; and he thought it was a terrible thing to be called by such a name. He rose from his comfortable seat, and left the great hotel. He felt that no one could turn him out of the streets, and he felt more at home there. But it was not pleasant to think of wandering about the city all night, as he had all day. He thought he might find some shed or other building where he

could sleep on a hard floor, and that he should be more likely to find such accommodations near the wharf. He walked to the vicinity of the pier where he had landed the day before.

It was nearly night; and he found that all the great buildings which he had seen open earlier in the day were now closed. But his former experience in the "Mud-turtle" caused him to look at the various craft in the river. Plenty of boats would be left open during the night, and he could leave early in the morning before the owners wished to use them. He walked along by the side of the water till he saw a handsome schooner of not more than forty tons, which looked as though she might give him a resting-place till morning. He waited till it was quite dark, and then went on board of her.

He found that she was a very beautiful vessel; and he had no doubt she was a pleasure-yacht, such as Loud, the purchaser of his boat, had pointed out to him. The cabin door was securely locked; and he went forward to see if there was any way in that part of the vessel to get under the deck, for the nights were chilly. There was a fore-hatch, but that was secured by a padlock. Under the foresail there was a skylight, the sashes on each side of which could be raised when desirable. He tried one of them, but it was fastened; the other was not, for some careless steward had neglected his duty.

Wade Brooks meant to do his duty in all things, and not do any thing that he knew to be wrong; but

the fact that everybody had used the "Mud-turtle" at will probably gave him the idea that there could be nothing out of the way in his sleeping on board of this yacht. He opened the skylight, and climbed down into the space below. When he had been in the place where he had brought up for a few moments, he could penetrate the darkness enough to discern the objects the apartment contained. He saw a stove; and this satisfied him that he was in the kitchen of the yacht; and Loud had told him that rich men lived in these boats for weeks and even months. He felt about him to get a better idea of the place, and happened to put his hand on a match-box near the stove. It was full of matches, and he lighted one of them in order to find a good place to sleep. He saw a door which he thought opened into the cabin; but it was locked.

But he did not care to go into the cabin: he was content to take a less inviting part of the craft. On one side of the kitchen he found a door which was not fastened; and he opened it, lighting another match to see what the room contained. Though he did not know it, this was the state-room of the sailing-master. At the other end of it was a door opening into the cabin. In the state-room was a single berth with a good deal of space under it. The bed was all made up; but Wade did not think it was quite the thing for him to get into it, for it looked very nice and clean. The space under it was good enough for him; and, lighting a third match, he

proceeded to examine it. It seemed to be filled up with old coats and other garments, which are always useful in a boat. They made a good bed, and Wade at once buried himself in them.

It was hardly seven o'clock, but the wanderer was so tired that he dropped asleep almost as soon as he had stretched himself out. He was chilly, and he had worried himself into the deepest depths of the pile of old garments. Though the ripple of the waves as they beat against the side of the yacht could be heard, there was no other sound to disturb the sleeper.

At three o'clock in the morning, though Wade knew not the time, he was awakened by the sound of voices, and by a great noise on the deck of the yacht. He was alarmed, for he would not have been caught in the vessel for a great deal. He would be accused of an attempt to steal, or something of that kind. It would be "just his luck" to be charged with some crime which he had never meditated. But to show himself was to confess that he was on board of the vessel; and all the rest would follow. He determined to keep still, and trust to his chances to escape at a favorable time.

He lay still and listened; and the loudest noise was on the deck. He was sure they were getting the yacht under way; but he thought it was very odd for gentlemen who sailed for pleasure to go off in the middle of the night, as he judged it to be. In a few minutes more, the tipping of the vessel upon

one side assured him that she was under way, as did the increased splashing of the water against the side of the yacht. As soon as the vessel was in motion the noise on deck ceased. Wade found that the door leading into the cabin had been opened, and he realized that several persons occupied that apartment. He heard the voices of at least two women, and they seemed to be crying when they spoke.

Of course Wade was deeply interested in the proceedings, and he listened with all his might. In a little while he was conscious, from the talk he heard, that one of the party had been guilty of some crime, or had done something wrong. They spoke out loud; and the wanderer beneath the captain's berth had no difficulty in understanding all that was said.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN EARLY BREAKFAST FOR TWO.

SUDDENLY the flow of conversation in the cabin ceased, and Wade Brooks heard a heavy step on the stairs that led down from the deck. The talk appeared to be interrupted by the coming of the owner of the heavy boots, as though he was not in the confidence of those in the cabin.

“We are all right now, Mr. Wallgood,” said a man with a voice as heavy as the sound of the boots.

“Wallgood,” thought the wanderer. “That is the name of a family in Midhampton; and a man of that name is the cashier of the Walnut National Bank.”

“I wish it were all right, Capt. Bendig,” said one of the ladies, with a heavy sob.

“Oh! it is all right, Mrs. Wallgood,” added Capt. Bendig, with as much gentleness as a rough man like him could assume. “I shall put you on board of Capt. Crogick’s ship to-day, or at least by to-morrow. I don’t know exactly where to find him: but he will be on the lookout for me, as well as I for him; and it will be only a few hours, more or less. I shall run along the south coast of Long Island till we make

out the ship. I may overhaul him before we get to Fire Island, and I may not till we reach Montauk. But I must have something to eat; for I lost my supper in this business last night."

"Just my case," said Wade to himself; and he wished he might be asked to share the captain's early meal.

"Here, Pollish, where are you?" called the captain.

"Here, sir," replied the person called for; and he appeared to come by the door which led from the pantry to the cabin, which was between the latter and the kitchen.

"Where is Beafbon?" asked Capt. Bendig.

"I guess he was on a spree last night, for he was pretty full when he came on board at twelve o'clock; and he turned in at once," answered Pollish, who was the cabin steward.

"Call him, and tell him to get me a beefsteak as soon as he can, with a cup of hot coffee," added Capt. Bendig. "Have it on the shelf in my state-room; and tell him if he is more than thirty minutes about it, I will discharge him as soon as we get back to New York."

This was decided enough to show the character of the man; and Wade did not much like the idea of dealing with him, as he felt that he must before the cruise was finished; and it appeared now that it might last two or three days. Wade had slept full eight hours when he woke, and he was wide awake

now. In a few minutes he heard a rattling of the stove in the kitchen, which was separated from the state-room only by a thin bulkhead. Capt. Bendig returned to the deck as soon as he had ordered his breakfast. Wade could tell about every thing that was done on board by the sounds that came to him.

“Does that man know about this miserable business?” asked Mrs. Wallgood, when he had heard the retreating steps of the captain.

“I suppose he does, though I did not tell him,” replied a man whom Wade took to be the husband of the lady.

“I know he does,” added the other female; and Wade had yet to learn who she was, though the information soon came to him. “He has managed the whole of this business: he has brought us all to New York, and will put us all on board of my husband’s vessel.”

She was the wife of Capt. Crogick, then; and Wade knew that she was the sister of Mrs. Wallgood, the cashier’s wife. There was something about the Walnut National Bank that was wrong; and Capt. Trustleton was the president of the bank.

“Are you not afraid that this man will betray you?” asked Mrs. Wallgood.

“No, I am not: he is a strong friend of Capt. Crogick; and he told me I might trust the life of myself and my wife in his keeping,” answered Mr. Wallgood.

“I almost wish he might betray you,” said Mrs. Wallgood, after a pause.

“Why do you wish that, my dear?” asked the husband, in trembling tones.

“Because I think the crime is a good deal worse than being found out,” replied the lady, with considerable spirit. “If I had known what all this was for, I would not have come with you.”

“Would you desert me?” demanded the wretched man.

“You have robbed the bank of a hundred thousand dollars; you have forfeited your bonds, and disgraced yourself and your wife. I feel that I no longer owe you any thing.”

“Do not be so hard upon him, Julia,” pleaded Mrs. Crogick.

“Your husband led him into the crime,” snapped the wife of the cashier.

“Neither of them intended to do any wrong. When the captain was in trouble, your husband helped him. Do not blame him for this,” continued the shipmaster’s wife.

“It was not the fault of either of us. Capt. Trustleton drove me to the wall, by shutting me out from the use of the money of the bank, when I was willing to pay as good interest as any other man,” argued the cashier.

But Wade did not understand much of the talk, — only that Mr. Wallgood had taken one hundred thousand dollars from the Walnut National Bank in Midhampton, and he and his wife were running away to escape the consequences of his crime. The

lady did not like the situation, and would not have come if she had understood the matter. Wade thought she was right, and did not think a woman was bound to stick to a husband after he had stolen one hundred thousand dollars; but then, Wade was not a judge of such matters, and his opinion was not worth much.

“I can’t get over it!” exclaimed this lady, after silence had prevailed in the cabin for some little time. “I came to New York, as I supposed, on a pleasure-excursion, at a moment’s notice; and now it seems as though this time was chosen because Capt. Trustleton was absent, looking up his runaway boy. Then it took three hours to tell this miserable story, and to persuade me that I ought to leave my native land, perhaps forever, with my husband, who is a defaulter to his bank for a hundred thousand dollars!”

Mrs. Wallgood groaned in bitterness of spirit when she had rehearsed her case; and certainly it was a heavy penalty to be driven from her home and friends by the crime of her husband.

“If you wish to desert me in my misfortune, you can do so, Julia,” groaned the cashier. “You can return to New York in this yacht.”

“Where is Capt. Crogick’s ship going to?” asked Mrs. Wallgood, as though this had something to do with the question.

“She is bound to Leghorn; and we can be as happy in Italy as at home for a few years, till this trouble blows over,” said Mrs. Crogick.

“And what are we to live on when we get there?” asked the indignant lady.

“We have money enough to live comfortably in Italy,” replied the cashier.

“Then you feathered the nest before you went away,” sneered the lady. “I thought this flight was because you could not pay your debts to the bank.”

“Such was the case; but a few thousands more or less will make no difference to the bank, my dear.”

But the conversation was interrupted by the appearance of the captain of the yacht, before whom the members of the party were not inclined to talk. While the conversation was in progress, Pollish had dropped a kind of table, which turned up against the bulkhead in the state-room, and had placed some dishes and a plate of soft bread, with some other articles, upon it. If Wade could not see the beefsteak when it was placed on the table, he could smell it; and the odor gave him an intense longing for a taste of it. He had eaten nothing but the bit of cracker and cheese in the bar-room of the hotel since his breakfast at an early hour the day before.

Wade was in no condition to inhale the odors of a beefsteak without coveting a taste of it. He envied the burly captain when he sat down on a stool at the table. The gimballed lamp was burning in the room, and Wade had a chance to see the awful man with whom by and by, without much doubt, he had a battle to fight; but the skipper seemed to be in a hurry,

and Wade thought he gobbled up his food like a pig, from the sounds which came to him from the great chops of the man. He was hardly more than five minutes at the table, and he rattled the dishes with so much vigor that Wade thought he would smash half of them.

When he went out of the state-room, he closed the door leading into the cabin. Wade saw that the opposite one, leading into a kind of room from which opened the doors into the fore-castle and the kitchen, was also closed. The circumstances tempted him. His empty stomach goaded him to action. He was so hungry that he did not stop long to consider the perils of the situation; but, disengaging himself from the pile of old garments which had concealed him from those who entered the state-room, he crawled out, and made a dive at the table. He was glad to see that the captain had been accredited with a bigger appetite than he possessed, for there was still at least a pound of steak on the plate. Wade grabbed the piece, for he could not stop to cut it, even if he had felt unequal to the task of eating the whole of it. With the steak in one hand, and two thick slices of bread in the other, he retreated to his lair; and, from the way he tore and devoured the beef and bread, his hiding-place was not very different from the den of any other wild beast.

He had no more than finished the hearty meal which the food he had taken furnished, before the captain of the yacht put in his second appearance. Wade

could see the big boots he wore, from his den. He stood in the middle of the small apartment; and as he did not do any thing, or even move, Wade concluded that he was thinking about something. He wondered if he missed the pound of beef and the slices of bread, and if these were the subject of his present reflections.

“What time is it now, Capt. Bendig?” asked Mrs. Crogick.

“About half-past four, marm: it is broad daylight now, and we shall have a fine day for your excursion.”

“And where are we now?”

“We have passed through the Narrows, and I have just headed her to the eastward. We have a strong breeze; and, if it holds, we can make Montauk Point by five o'clock this afternoon.”

The lady seemed to be satisfied, and the captain called for the steward.

CHAPTER XX.

A LATE DINNER.

WADE was positively alarmed when he heard the captain call for the steward. Was it possible that the skipper had only half finished his breakfast, and had gone on deck for a few minutes, intending to return and complete the meal when he had looked out for the course of the yacht?

“Pollish!” shouted the captain angrily, when his first call brought no response; and the second gave no better result.

Capt. Bendig seemed to be angry, and he stalked out of the room. But Wade heard his voice a moment later, for he had discovered the steward asleep in the passage-way.

“What do you pretend to be asleep for, you rascal you?” demanded the skipper of the yacht.

“I was asleep, sir,” replied Pollish. “I have been up all night, and I was very tired.”

“Up all night, were you? And why were you up all night?” inquired the captain sharply.

“I had to look out for the vessel, you see. I did not know at what time you and the passengers were coming; and so I staid on deck all night,” replied

Pollish with proper meekness. "I had the cabin lighted and every thing ready for you since seven o'clock last evening. I was sleepy; but I was afraid to lose myself for a moment. I know how particular you are, sir; and I did not leave the deck even for a minute; and it was so cold on deck I could not go to sleep there."

One thing was certain to Wade, if it was not to any one else on board of the yacht: that Pollish was an abominable liar. It was probable that he had been on a spree with Beafbon the cook. Wade was entirely willing to refrain from telling what he knew about the matter for the present; but he stored up what he had heard for use in the future. Certainly if this man had been faithful to his duty, and had not left the fore skylight unfastened, the wanderer could not have obtained admission to the interior of the vessel.

"Don't tell me you were asleep," said the captain, after he had listened to the long speech of the steward. "What have you done with my beefsteak?"

"With your beefsteak, sir?" and Wade was willing to believe that he was surprised at the implied charge.

"That's what I said! Why don't you answer me, instead of repeating what I say? What have you done with my steak?"

"I have not done any thing with it. I put it on the table, and that is the last I saw of it," answered

Pollish ; and Wade believed he told the truth, whatever opinion Capt. Bendig had on the subject.

“ I know you put it on the table, and I ate part of it ; then I had to go on deck to look after the course of the vessel. When I came back, the steak and half of the bread were gone. Tell the truth for once in your life, and own up that you ate it.”

“ But I didn't eat it, sir,” protested the steward.

“ Then what has become of it ? ” demanded the captain sternly.

“ I don't know, sir. I lay down in the passage while you were eating, and I didn't wake again till you called me. I was very tired, sir, for Beafbon and me had to work very hard in the afternoon to get the provisions and stores in ; and then not to get a wink of sleep, it was more than I could stand,” protested Pollish.

“ Have any of the hands been below ? ”

“ Not that I know of, sir : if they did, they had to step over me, for I lay by the door of your room.”

“ I believe you are lying. But no matter for that now : we will settle it when this cruise is up. Get me another steak.”

Pollish was not disposed to argue the matter any further, but hastened to obey the order. The captain went on deck again, and he seemed to be very attentive to the management of the vessel. As soon as the second edition of his breakfast was ready, the captain came down. Wade wished he would take his meals in the cabin, for he did not like to have him in

the room, though he had the best right there. The wanderer found it prudent to breathe with the utmost care, lest he should be heard; but the swash of the sea now made noise enough to overcome any feeble sounds. He could not help thinking what the consequences would be if he should happen to cough or sneeze; and he concluded that it would be more prudent for him to choke to death than to do either. He was very thankful that he had not a cold in the head or on the lungs.

Since his stomach had been so thoroughly filled, Wade felt quite jolly. He did not like his narrow quarters under the berth, but he was tolerably happy even there. He could not help wondering how the matter would come out in the end. The captain might not again leave his breakfast for the accommodation of the passenger; and, in the course of a day or two, hunger might drive him from his hiding-place, even in the face of the wrath of the skipper. But it was no use to worry about that yet; and he did not, though he could not help thinking of the means of getting out of the scrape when he was discovered.

Capt. Bendig finished his breakfast, and went on deck. Not till then did Wade dare to change his position; and he fixed himself as comfortably as he could. He had nothing to do but think; but his thoughts were not very profitable to himself or anybody else. While he was thinking he went to sleep. The motion of the yacht seemed to make him sleepy.

When he woke, he wondered if he snored. He did not know: he had never slept with any one who could give him the information. He did not intend to go to sleep in the daytime; for the captain might come to his room, and hear him.

At noon, as he judged it was, he recognized sundry savory odors which assured him the matter of dinner was not to be neglected. The skipper kept the door of the state-room closed, so that he could not tell what was going on in the cabin. At any rate, the captain did not dine in his state-room, and Wade had no chance to lay in another supply of food. The afternoon was a long one. Wade spent half of it in thinking how he should get his supper. But in the middle of the afternoon, this question seemed to be settled for him. He was hungry again, for ten or twelve hours had elapsed since he had his early breakfast with Capt. Bendig.

“Pollish!” called the skipper.

“Here, sir,” replied the steward, presenting himself at the door of the state-room from which the captain called him.

“Get me a steak, with fried potatoes,” added the captain.

“In the cabin, sir?”

“No: you know I never take my meals in the cabin when there are passengers on board. In this room.”

This was hopeful, at least, for Wade; for he thought there would be a chance for him to get a

piece of bread, if nothing more. It was clear now that Capt. Bendig had not dined, or even lunched, unless the food had been carried to him on deck. He placed himself so that he could look out into the room, for he felt obliged to watch his opportunity. He saw the steward set the table; and in less than half an hour Pollish placed a beefsteak on the table, and then passed into the cabin to call the captain, who was on deck.

As quick as lightning, Wade sprang out of his den; and, seeing two slices of sirloin on the table, he took one of them, with a couple of cuts of bread, and returned to his abode beneath the berth. Burying himself beneath the old garments, or rather piling them up like a breastwork in front of him, he proceeded to devour the beef and bread before the captain came down, or to do as much as possible towards it.

“I think the ship is in sight, Mr. Wallgood,” said the captain, as he paused at the door on his way to his room. “There is a large ship ahead, which is not doing all she can with this lively breeze; and I think she is the ‘Housatonic.’”

“Is that the name of the ship we are to cross the ocean in?” asked Mrs. Wallgood, who spoke as though she was better reconciled to the voyage than when Wade had heard from her last.

“That is Capt. Crogick’s ship. I thought we should overhaul her before night with this breeze,” replied Capt. Bendig.

He entered his room, and seated himself at the table. Wade promptly suspended the movements of his jaws. He did not stir; he did not breathe aloud. For some time Capt. Bendig plied his knife and fork with vigor, and the waif under his berth could hear the crisp fried potatoes snap in his teeth.

“Pollish!” called he at last.

“Here, sir,” replied the steward, who waited in the passage for further orders.

“Where is the cook?”

“At the galley, sir.”

“Send him to me.”

In a moment Beafbon appeared at the door of the state-room; and he looked so humble that he evidently expected a blowing-up for something. It was more likely that he supposed it related to his spree the night before, than to the real cause.

“Beafbon, how often must I tell you the same thing before you can understand me?” said the captain, introducing his subject in a proper manner.

“I don’t want to be told any thing more than once, captain,” replied the cook, relieved when he found that he was not sent for on account of the spree.

“Good! but how many times have I told you that I wanted more than one slice of these small sirloins? I don’t eat but two meals a day, and I want enough.”

Wade felt that his time had come.

“But I cooked two for you; and, if you did not get two, it is because the steward did not bring both

of them to you," protested Beafbon earnestly. "I mean to obey all orders; and I know you want two of those small steaks as well as I know my own name."

"Pollish again! I think he stole my breakfast this morning too," added Capt. Bendig. "What have you done with that other steak, Pollish? for you have not had time to eat it since I was called, and I have had my eye on you since I came below."

"I haven't touched the steaks, sir," pleaded poor Pollish; and Wade really felt bad to have him falsely charged with the theft; but then, what was a hungry boy to do?

"Don't lie, Pollish! you did the same thing this morning."

"No, sir, neither then nor now; and I am willing to take my oath there were two slices on the dish when I put it on the table," replied the steward.

"Get me another steak, Beafbon: we will settle these matters when we have more time than now."

The captain went on deck to wait for the rest of his dinner.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GHOST OF THE STATE-ROOM.

WHEN the other steak was ready, Capt. Bendig came down to attend to it. By this time Wade had made away with his share of the late dinner; and he was sure, if the captain was as hungry as he had been, he enjoyed the meal. As the captain had all he wanted, he could not complain of Wade; and up to the present time he had not done so. The "Housatonic" was in sight, and this cruise would soon come to an end. Wade thought it was possible that he might get back to New York without being discovered; for the captain seemed to have no use for the old garments under the berth.

The captain finished the second edition of his dinner, and then went into the cabin. The passengers seemed to stay there from the fear that some passing vessel might see them; at least, Wade wondered that they did not go on deck when the weather was so fine. Even in his hiding-place, he could realize the nervousness of the party.

"I think we shall have to keep moving till after dark," said Capt. Bendig, as he passed into the cabin.

“Why so?” asked Mrs. Wallgood, who seemed to be more inclined to talk than the rest of the party.

“It is hardly safe to put you on board of the ship in broad daylight, when there are so many vessels about,” replied the skipper of the yacht.

“But no one will know who we are,” suggested the lady.

“That is very true; but if a vessel should report in New York that a yacht had transferred several passengers to an outward-bound ship, somebody would want to know what it all meant; and there are pilot-boats about here which may know the ship. We can just as well wait till after dark; and we shall not have to wait long. Besides, there is a steamer off to the southward of us, that looks like the revenue-cutter; and these fellows are always poking their noses in where they are not wanted.”

“I was rather anxious to get on board of the ship as soon as possible,” added Mr. Wallgood, with something like a shudder.

“What is the matter with you?” asked his wife; and Wade thought her tones were not as kindly as they might have been.

“I’m not very well. The excitement of this affair seems to take hold of me,” added the cashier, with another quiver. “I am cold; and my overcoat has been left behind.”

“Why didn’t you bring it with you? You knew that we were going upon a sea-voyage, if I did not,” said the wife; and it was plain enough to Wade that

she was not yet wholly reconciled to the future, even though it included a residence in Italy.

“I didn’t think of it. I had enough on my mind, without considering my bodily comfort.”

“If that’s all that ails you, I think we can get over that,” interposed the captain. “I can fit you out with an old coat that will keep you warm, though it will not be as handsome as you have been in the habit of wearing.”

“If it only keeps me warm, that is all I want of it,” replied Mr. Wallgood, with an audible shiver.

“We keep a lot of old clothes on board for just such cases as this. The owner sends all his own old duds to the yacht for this purpose; and I stow them away under the berth in my state-room. Some of them are very good coats,” said the captain, as he returned to his room.

“Just my luck!” exclaimed Wade to himself; and the hope of getting back to New York without being discovered broke down all at once.

But there was a chance for him even yet; for he had piled most of the old garments in front of him, forming a barricade; and the captain might find the coat he wanted without disturbing or discovering him.

“Let me see: you are smaller than I am; and I know the size of every coat in the batch. I think I can fit you as well as an up-town tailor,” continued the captain, pausing at the door as if to take the measure of the cashier.

“I don’t care for the fit, if it only keeps me warm,” said the quaking defaulter. “Capt. Crogick will let me have one as soon as I get on board of the ship.”

Capt. Bendig came into the state-room, and began to pull out the coats which Wade had arranged to conceal himself. He was a good deal more particular in making his selection than Wade thought was necessary under the circumstances. He pulled out one, and examined it; and then another. He seemed to know exactly what he desired; and he was not to be satisfied till he found it, though his passenger was shivering all the time for the want of it. Wade considered this very stupid conduct on his part, and thought it cruel to let the poor man suffer so long. At last he had pulled out all the garments which had concealed the stowaway; and, if he had stooped down, he could not have helped seeing the intruder.

“Just my luck!” said Wade, with something like a shudder. “He wants the coat I am lying on.”

He had been measuring the captain all the morning; not for the size of his body, as the skipper did the defaulter, but for the quality of his temper; and he was sure he was a bully, from the way he treated Pollish and the cook. He had a good deal of sympathy with the steward, for he knew he had been misjudged, though he had told some abominable lies. He even felt, that, if he could keep out of the captain’s clutches till after dark, he might be able to come out of his hiding-place, and make friends with

Pollish ; for that worthy would not care to have him tell the captain that the yacht was deserted when he came on board of her at dark the evening before. The steward would have a motive for protecting him ; and he was not human if he did not look out for himself.

Wade pushed all the garments out to the front of the berth, except the one he was lying upon ; and he would have done the same by that if he could have done it without making too much noise. But Capt. Bendig had not yet found the one he wanted. He stooped down, and reached into the space beneath the berth ; and Wade felt his big hand upon him. It was with the greatest effort that he prevented himself from crying out.

“What under the light of the moon is beneath this berth ?” muttered the captain, as he evidently felt something that was not wholly in the woollen-goods line, but without knowing exactly what it was.

Capt. Bendig began to get down on his knees so that he could see as well as feel what was under the berth. But it was beginning to be dark in the room, though it was only four in the afternoon ; but the apartment never had much light. The searcher was not satisfied with his means of observation ; and it is possible he suspected something that did not belong there was concealed beneath the berth.

“Pollish !” he called.

“Here, sir !” replied the steward, who always seemed to be at hand when he was not asleep.

“Bring me a light, and don’t be more than a second about it,” said the captain, with a ripple of excitement in his tones.

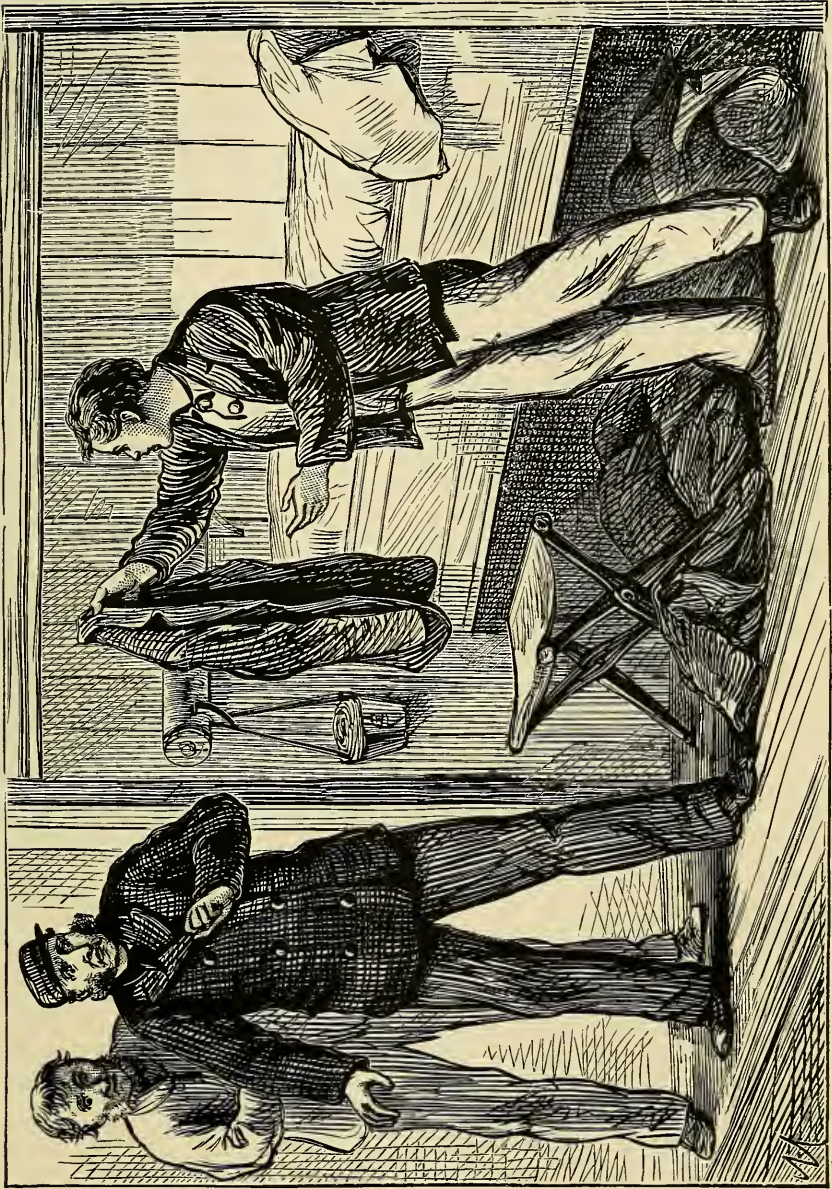
Pollish lighted the lamp that swung on gimbals in the state-room, and then took it from its place, handing it to the skipper.

Wade felt that his hour had come, and it was useless to hope for any thing to turn up in his favor; it was “just his luck,” and he could only make the best of it. But he saw that nothing was to be made by being humble and submissive to a man like Capt. Bendig, who was a brute and a tyrant by nature, though he was doubtless a very good seaman, and was very attentive to his duty. Wade determined to keep a “stiff upper lip,” and he hoped he might interest the passengers in his fate.

With the lamp in his hand, the captain began to stoop down again. He pulled away the garments he had drawn from their resting-place, so that he could see under the berth.

“Is this the coat you want?” asked Wade, tossing the one he had been lying upon out into the room.

He had not made up his mind to say just these words when he was discovered; but they came to him, and they answered his purpose as well as any thing else. Capt. Bendig was startled by the voice from this unexpected quarter; and he rose a good deal more hastily than he had stooped, for he was somewhat stiff in his joints. He even retreated towards the door of the cabin. Possibly he believed



"IS THIS THE COAT YOU WANT?" ASKED WADE. — Page 170.

in ghosts; for he was an ignorant man, and had been at sea all his life. He may have thought it was some departed spirit he had abused in the flesh while he was the mate of a ship, returning to "spook" him for his cruelty. Certainly he was frightened; and Wade was satisfied that his presence had not been suspected, as he thought before, till he spoke. The captain may have expected to find a jug of whiskey which the cook or the steward had concealed there; but he evidently did not calculate upon finding a human being in his particular sanctum.

"What's under that berth, Pollish?" asked the captain; and his trepidation was apparent in his tones.

"I don't know, sir," replied the steward promptly.

"Did you hear a voice?" continued Capt. Bendig.

"I did, sir, very distinctly," answered Pollish, who seemed to be disturbed by the sound that had come from under the berth. "It must be the Devil. But the Devil wouldn't hide himself under the captain's berth on board of the 'Moonlight.' He has too many friends on board to put up with any such accommodations."

Pollish meant that the captain was one of them, but he was not so imprudent as to say so. If the steward had been disturbed by the voice, he was not alarmed.

"Who is stowed away under that berth?" demanded Capt. Bendig, as soon as he realized that the

captain of a vessel should not be frightened at any thing.

“I don't know, sir: I haven't seen anybody about the yacht but those that belong in her,” replied Polish, who possibly realized that the blame was to fall upon him for every thing that was wrong.

“Have you or Beafbon hid one of your friends in there? If you have, you will wish you were boarding with the fellow you spoke about just now,” added Capt. Bendig.

“I haven't any friend to hide; and, if I had, what should I put him in there for, when I could find a better place in the fo'castle?”

“Well, we will soon know who it is,” continued the skipper, approaching the berth again with the light.

“Is this the coat you want?” repeated Wade, as he sprang out into the room.

CHAPTER XXII.

CAPT. BENDIG'S PROMISE.

WADE BROOKS came out of the space under the berth, with the coat in his hand; and, as soon as he could get upon his feet, he held out the garment to the astonished skipper. He was determined not to be abused if he could help himself, and to put the best face possible upon the situation. He had not intended to steal, or to do any thing wrong, when he came on board of the "Moonlight," which he had just learned was the name of the yacht. He had never considered a boat like a house, for his experience with the "Mud-turtle" had misled him. He was wrong, of course; but then he had many things to learn, though it is half the battle of life to mean well.

It is true, also, that he had helped himself to the skipper's beefsteaks; but he had a notion that what food a person wanted to eat was not like other property. Even Mrs. Swikes, mean as she was, would give almost anybody something to eat; and in Midhampton people never found any fault if the passer-by helped himself to the apples in the orchard which

had fallen from the trees, though it was a crime to knock them off.

“Who are you?” demanded Capt. Bendig, as Wade held the coat up before him; and he retreated a few steps when the boy first made his appearance.

“You needn’t be afraid of me: I won’t hurt you,” replied the stowaway, without answering the direct question.

“What were you doing under my berth, you rascal?” continued the captain, rapidly recovering his self-possession.

“I have been sleeping most of the time there,” replied Wade, smiling as though earth had no sorrows, and especially as though there were none in the “Moonlight.”

“You have, have you?” said Capt. Bendig, beginning to comprehend the situation; and very probably he did not like it any better because he had exhibited some signs of alarm in the presence of the steward.

“How long have you been there?” he asked angrily.

“Something less than three weeks,” replied Wade, glancing at Pollish, and determining not to betray him if he could possibly avoid it.

“Three weeks!” exclaimed the captain.

“No, sir: I said less than three weeks. I don’t think I could tell exactly how long I have been in there.”

“And it was you that took the beefsteaks?” added the captain, with a heavy frown.

"Yes, sir. I was willing to divide the meat between us; and I don't think I took more than a fair half."

"You impudent young puppy!" exclaimed the captain, taken all aback by the cool manner of the stowaway. "Was it your breakfast, or mine?"

"Your part was yours, and my part was mine," replied Wade.

"That's more impudence than I ever saw in one boy before. I suppose you think any thing on board of this vessel belongs to you, and you can help yourself."

"No, sir: I don't say that," protested Wade. "I am willing you should have every thing you want. I don't wish to be mean."

"Oh, you don't!"

"No, sir: I am always willing to do the fair thing."

"So am I: and, before I have done with you, I shall give you the biggest thrashing you ever had in your life," said the captain fiercely.

"It will be a big licking, then," added Wade. "I know what a licking is, as well as almost any fellow of my age."

"Who are you? What are you doing on board of this yacht? How did you get on board of her? Where are you going?" demanded Bendig, who had begun to wonder where the fellow came from.

"That's lots of questions; and I don't believe I can answer them all."

“Who are you? and if you don’t answer me I will tie you up to the rigging, and give you a flogging!” stormed the captain.

“Not the least need for the flogging. I am Wade Brooks.”

“What are you doing on board of this vessel?”

“Nothing except answering your questions. If you want to hire a hand to help sail this yacht, I think I could do my duty; and I will promise to stand by you whenever you want a friend.”

“How did you get on board of the yacht?”

“I just came on board of her, the same as any one would.”

“I don’t believe that. If you had, some one would have seen you. You are a little loafer, — one of those scalawags that hang about the piers, looking out for a chance to steal and a place to sleep. I know you; and I have seen you before, and a lot more just like you. When I have more time to spare, I shall give you a flogging that will teach you never again to put your foot on board of the ‘Moonlight.’”

“If you say you can’t accommodate me, that’s enough; and I never will go on board of your vessel again, and without troubling you to flog me,” replied Wade, who did not like the ugly looks of the captain.

“I will make sure of you by giving you the licking,” added the skipper.

“If you will do such a thing, of course I can’t help myself. I think you will make a mistake if

you do any thing of that kind: indeed, I know you will," said Wade positively.

"I will give it to you as soon as I have time to attend to the matter," added the captain in a savage tone. "When did you come on board?"

"If I'm to have the flogging, I guess I won't answer any more questions," replied Wade.

"You will answer them by and by," continued Capt. Bendig, moving into the cabin.

Wade did not like the idea of being flogged, any better than any other boy of his years would have liked it. It was not pleasant to think of; and he seated himself in the state-room, and tried not to think of it. The burden on his mind was, how to get rid of it; for he was determined not to submit if there was any way to escape it.

The presence of the boy on board disturbed Mr. Wallgood very much. He remembered that he had seen the door leading into the captain's state-room wide open while he and his wife had talked about the business of the excursion. If the stowaway had been concealed under that berth, he might have heard all that was said by his party.

"He don't understand it," said the captain, in reply to the objections of the defaulter. "He is a wharf-rat, and he hasn't brains enough to fit out a mouse, to say nothing of a rat."

"I don't know about that," added Mr. Wallgood. "He talks like a boy that knows what he is about."

"No: he's stupid, and hasn't the least idea what

is going on, even if he heard the whole of the talk. You can speak to him, and satisfy yourself, if you wish; but I must go on deck, and look out for the ship."

Wade heard all this, and he did not like the idea of being considered stupid. He felt very sure that he was not stupid. Still he did not care to tell the cashier of the bank all he knew about the business. He had often seen Mr. Wallgood in Midhampton, but he was confident that the defaulter did not know him. Lon Trustleton had pointed the cashier out to Matt once, or he would not have known him. But, before the man of money could say any thing to him, Pollish had him on the rack.

"How came you in this yacht?" demanded the steward, in a tone even more savage than the captain had used.

To his inferiors, he was even more of a bully than the skipper of the yacht; but Wade had no fear of him.

"You heard what I said to the captain; and I haven't any thing different to say to you," replied Wade, with as much independence as though he had belonged to the vessel, and had come on board of her in a perfectly regular manner.

"None of your lip, or I'll bat you over the head," replied Pollish. "I won't take any of your sauce, if the captain does."

"What will you do?"

"I'll bat you over the head! I'll learn you to steal the beefsteaks, and then have it laid to me."

“All right: if you want to do any thing of that sort, go ahead; and I shall have something to say to Capt. Bendig, that he will like to hear.”

“What do you mean by that?” demanded Polish; and perhaps he did not feel that his record was as clean as it might be.

“Bat me over the head; and after that you ask the captain what I meant by it.”

“Can't you tell me now what you mean?”

“Yes, I can tell you now; and I don't think you will want to bat me over the head. It was mean for you to tell the captain that the cook had been on a spree, when you had been off yourself,” replied Wade, with no little confidence in his ability to conquer a peace.

“I wasn't on a spree,” added Polish.

“You told the captain you were on board all the time in the evening and all night, on the lookout for him; which was all a lie.”

“How do you know it was?” demanded the steward, deeply interested by this time.

“You were not on board at half-past seven, when I came on board: if you had been, you would have seen me, and would not have allowed me to make my bed in the captain's state-room.”

“How did you get inside of the yacht?” asked Polish, in a subdued tone.

“You left the skylight unfastened, and I got in that way. I did not mean to steal any thing. I was robbed of all the money I had, and wanted a place

to sleep. I didn't think it would do any harm to any one if I slept in this vessel."

In reply to the steward's questions he told him as much as he pleased of his story.

"I didn't tell the captain how I got into the yacht, because I knew it would get you into a scrape," he added. "All I want is to get out of the vessel."

"You have done me a good turn, my lad; and I won't forget it. But I don't know that I can do any thing to help you. The captain is one of those men you can't reason with," replied Pollish.

"I don't care about taking the licking he promised me. Can't you hide me in some other place till the yacht gets back to New York?" asked Wade.

"I don't know: I will try," replied Pollish.

At this moment Mr. Wallgood called the stow-away, and he went out into the cabin.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IMMENSE RICHES.

WADE had a full view of the cabin for the first time when the cashier called him into this apartment. It was very elegantly fitted up; and he wondered if the beautiful vessel belonged to Capt. Bendig. Pollish afterwards told him that she was the property of a wealthy gentleman, and that Capt. Bendig was only the sailing-master. The owner had gone into the country for a few weeks, and the skipper was making a dollar on his own account by the present excursion. He was to receive five hundred dollars for the use of the vessel and for his own services; and each of the men on board was to have one hundred dollars for his work and his secrecy, especially for the latter.

“What is your name, my boy?” asked Mr. Wallgood, when Wade presented himself in the cabin.

“Wade Brooks,” replied the stowaway; and he felt sure the cashier had never even heard the name.

“I suppose you live in New York.”

“I lived there yesterday.”

“Where do you live to-day?”

“I live here.”

“But where is your home?”

“I haven’t any home. My father and mother are both dead.”

“What are you doing in this vessel?”

Wade told him how he happened to be in the yacht. All he wanted was to get back to New York.

“What are you going to do in New York?” asked Mr. Wallgood.

“I want to get something to do, so that I can earn my own living.”

“Have you any money to pay your board till you get work?”

“Not a cent: I had some money, but it was stolen from me,” replied Wade, giving the details of his experience.

“You would like some money, wouldn’t you?”

“I should; but I don’t want it bad enough to steal it,” replied Wade; and perhaps he did not mean to cast any reflections on the past conduct of the cashier.

“Perhaps you heard something that was said in the cabin early this morning?” continued the defaulter, beginning to approach the subject that worried him.

“Perhaps I did,” replied Wade cautiously.

“What did you hear?”

“I didn’t hear much; and perhaps I was too stupid to understand it,” added Wade, with a chuckle. “But the captain of the vessel has promised me a licking, and I mean to hold my tongue.”

The cashier plied him closely with questions ; but Wade had made up his mind to answer none of them, and he did not.

“ I suppose you know the captain is going to put us on board of a ship ? ” persisted the defaulter.

“ I don't know any thing about what he is going to do, except that he means to give me a licking, ” replied the stowaway blankly.

“ I think he is stupid, as the captain said, ” added Mrs. Crogick, in a low tone, though Wade heard what she said.

“ At least you know that we are a party who started in the night from New York ; and you will see that we are all put on board of a ship. ”

“ I know what you say about it. ”

“ For reasons which I will not explain, for you would not understand them, we don't wish to have it known that we have left New York as we did. Do you think you could keep the secret ? ” asked Mr. Wallgood ; and by this time he was somewhat excited.

“ I know I could if I tried, and if I got fair play ; but, after I have had a licking, I don't feel like holding my tongue, ” replied Wade, deeming it best to get an anchor out to windward.

“ I pay all the men on this vessel a hundred dollars to hold their tongues. I will pay you the same, if you will keep the secret. ”

“ One hundred dollars ! ” exclaimed Wade, who had heard of such a sum of money, but he did not realize that he could ever possess such an amount.

“That is just what I will give you, if you will never in your life say what has happened on board of this vessel,” added Mr. Wallgood.

“Shall I have the money to keep?” asked the incredulous boy; and he had already begun to think of buying a farm in his native town, and astonishing the natives with his wealth.

“You shall have the money all for your own; and I will make sure before I leave the vessel that the captain will not flog you,” continued the defaulter.

“I will keep the secret to the end of time, if I am allowed to keep the money,” said Wade; and he would not have said it if he had thought that the sum he was to be paid had been stolen from the Walnut National Bank.

The cashier handed him a roll of bills; and Wade proceeded at once to count them. It contained the amount mentioned, and he put it into his pocket. He had hardly done so before the captain came down into the cabin.

“What are you doing in here, you young rascal?” demanded the skipper angrily. “You think you must have a place in the cabin, do you?”

“I called him in, Capt. Bendig,” interposed Mr. Wallgood. “It is not his fault that he is here. I have made the same bargain with him that was made with each of the crew. I have paid him the money.”

“You have not given that scalawag a hundred dollars, have you?” exclaimed the captain.

“I have; and I feel safer now than I did before. I

hope you will not attempt to flog him; for really I don't think he meant to do any thing wrong."

"He had no business in the yacht; and he won't tell me how he got on board of the vessel. He deserves a flogging to teach him better than to take up his quarters in a gentleman's yacht."

Wade retreated to the state-room, feeling that the cashier could settle this question better when he was absent than when he was present. The door was open, and he could hear all that was said. In the end Capt. Bendig promised not to flog him, after a good deal of pleading on the part of the defaulter; and this was all Wade cared to hear, though he could not help listening to something more as long as he staid in the state-room.

"That infernal revenue-cutter is coming up this way; and we shall have to wait till night before we put you on board of the 'Housatonic,'" said the captain, as soon as the flogging-question was settled.

"A few hours will make no difference. She can have no motive for overhauling the yacht," replied the cashier.

"None at all. The bank people could not have known that any thing was wrong about the establishment before nine or ten o'clock this morning; and the cutter was not in port last night," added the captain.

The party in the cabin seemed to think they were still safe; and they expressed no fears of the result of the expedition. While Wade sat in the captain's

state-room, Pollish came in to see him. He closed the cabin-door, and evidently had something to say.

"See here, lad, I have a place for you; but it is all my situation is worth for the captain to find out that I put you into it," said Pollish in a whisper.

"I never will tell him, if he pulls my bones apart for it," replied Wade. "You can trust me as long as you live. But I heard the captain tell the folks in the cabin that he wouldn't flog me."

"Don't you believe him," said Pollish earnestly. "He will do any thing he likes, in spite of his promises. Keep out of sight till the yacht gets back to New York."

"I will take any place you say," added Wade.

"In the fore-castle you will find a place under the lower berth, as far forward as you can go, on the starboard side."

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Pollish; and, when I can do any thing for you, I shall be very glad to do it," replied Wade.

"But the captain may find you there, though I don't think he will," added the steward.

"If he finds me, I won't say a word that will do you any harm. But I think I needn't go into the place till these people in the cabin are gone; for the captain promised Mr. Wallgood that I should not be touched."

"There is the place, and you can go into it when you are ready. I think you had better go and look at it while all the hands are on deck. You must not

let any of the sailors know you are in the place, for they may blow on you."

"I will not;" and Wade went into the fore-castle to look at his future hiding-place.

It was very close quarters for a boy of his size; and, like the space under the captain's berth, it was filled with old clothes. Wade raked them out, and then prepared the den for his reception when it should be necessary to use it. He put most of the garments in another place; but he left enough to form a barricade in front of the aperture, that would conceal him from the captain and others who might be looking for him.

We do not like to cast reflections upon the good judgment of Wade and the steward; but the hiding-place was not well chosen. As Capt. Bendig had found him under one berth, he would be very likely to look under all the berths in the yacht when he wanted to find the stowaway. But Wade did not believe he should have any occasion to use the place, for the captain had promised not to flog him; and he did not believe he could do any thing with him except to carry him back to New York. He would be very glad to go there; for the liberality of the cashier had made him rich, and he could live a year at least on the vast sum of money in his possession. He did not care whether school kept, or not.

He was no longer afraid of the captain, as long as the cabin party remained on board; for he was confident that the cashier would protect him for his own

safety, if for no other reason. He had wanted to go on deck, and now he went. He had a place of retreat in case of trouble, and all he had to do was to crawl into it. It was nearly sunset when he went up the cabin steps. He saw the ship at least two miles ahead, for she had been under all sail from the time she had made out the yacht; and it is probable that she had seen the revenue-cutter, or she would have shortened sail, and waited for the "Moonlight" to come up.

At sunset the wind all died out, while the "Housatonic" was still two miles distant. The cutter was a mile from either vessel. Nothing could be done; and the ship and the yacht lay where they were all night.

CHAPTER XXIV.

UNWELCOME PASSENGERS.

WE left Lon Trustleton and Matt Swikes at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. They had counted out and divided their ill-gotten treasure. The sudden appearance of Wade Brooks had disturbed them very much. He had been a stumbling-block to them, and they were afraid of him. As soon as he had departed, after he had refused to take any of the stolen money, Lon tried to put a bold face on the matter; but it was no use.

“He will tell the clerks in the office that we are here,” said Matt, when the door had closed behind the intruder.

“The clerks already know we are here, and he won’t tell them any news,” replied Lon.

“Wade will tell them who you are, and they know your father,” continued Matt. “I think we had better get out of this house as soon as we can.”

“The people here certainly know my father,” added Lon, musing. “I don’t know but the clerk would telegraph to my father if Wade told him that I was here, and that I had left home without his knowledge.”

“Then we are fools to stop here another minute,” protested Matt warmly. “I have no doubt that your father knows where you are by this time.”

“We will go down and get some dinner before we leave; for we have paid five dollars, and haven’t had any thing yet. My father can’t get here before eleven o’clock; and we have time enough to keep out of his way. Let us have one good dinner, if nothing else, before we leave this big city.”

“But we shall be caught if we fool with dinners,” Matt objected.

“We shall be more likely to be caught if we stay in this room. We don’t have to go down to the office to get to the dining-room.”

Matt was controlled, as usual, by his friend; and they went to the dining-room, where they dined upon the best the house afforded; and this was all they got for the five dollars they had advanced to pay their bills. They thought it was a dear dinner, but then it was a very nice one: at least Matt thought so, for he had never eaten a stylish dinner before; and Lon had to post him in regard to some things.

When the dinner was finished, Lon led the way down stairs; and, giving the office a wide berth, they got out of the house without attracting the attention of any of the clerks. They walked briskly till they had placed a good distance between themselves and the hotel.

“Where are we going now?” asked Lon.

“I’m sure I don’t know. I don’t think we shall

be safe in this city, if we intend to stay here," replied Matt.

"We are safe enough. This is a big city, and nobody could find us here."

"But we may blunder upon some one that knows us, the next minute. There are plenty of people from Midhampton in the city every day in the week."

"Well, where do you want to go?"

"I don't care where I go, if I only get where we are not in danger all the time."

"I'll tell you what I should like first-rate," added Lon, musing, as though he were not sure it was safe to tell what he would like.

"What is it?" asked Matt, who was ready for any thing that would take them out of the city, where he did not feel safe a single minute.

"I should like to go to sea."

"To sea!" exclaimed Matt; and this was certainly a bigger idea than he had ever harbored in connection with the runaway enterprise.

"That's the idea."

"Do you mean as sailors?"

"Of course not: I mean as passengers. We have the money to pay for the voyage. Then, if we are gone two or three months, the folks at home will be all the more glad to see us; and we shall get off easy."

"Where do you think of going?"

"I don't know. I heard that the ship 'Housa-

tonic ' was going to sea very soon. You know Capt. Crogick, Matt?"

"I only know that such a man lives in Midhampton when he is at home," replied Matt, who was rather pleased with the idea of sailing in a ship on the ocean.

"I saw him at his house this week; and he told me he should sail in a few days. You know he is the brother-in-law of the cashier of my father's bank."

"Where is he going to?" asked Matt, his interest increasing as Lon proceeded.

"He told me, but I have forgotten where it was: it was to some place in Europe."

"Will he take us on board?"

"I am afraid not; but we must provide for that in some way."

"I don't see how you can provide for it, if he is not willing to take us."

"We needn't let him see us till we have been out a day or two. We can do as Wade Brooks did with us. He got into the boat, and went to sleep there; and when he woke the boat was miles from Midhampton."

"Where is his ship? I should like to see it."

"I don't know where she is; but we can easily find her. She is called the 'Housatonic.'"

"Let us find her," said Matt. "Then if we like the looks of her, and we find a good chance, we will get on board of her."

They went down to the East River, and asked a

great many men where the ship "Housatonic" was; and they soon found her. She was a large and noble-looking vessel. A steam-tug was waiting to tow her down the harbor, but she was not quite ready to go.

"What do you say, Matt? Shall we go on board of her?" asked Lon.

"I am ready to do so," replied Matt.

"We can hide in her, and no one will see us until we are willing to be seen. But we must have something to eat during the time we hide on board of her," said Lon. "The captain knows me; and he will give us a berth in his cabin, and we shall be all right. He said he should not be gone more than three months."

Matt agreed to every thing that Lon suggested. They went up to a shop near the pier, and bought as much to eat as would last them a couple of days, consisting mostly of cakes and crackers. Matt took the bundle; and without much difficulty, for the officers were busy getting the ship ready for sea, and took no notice of them, they got on board. They found the house on deck where the sailors were lodged; and they slipped into it, and stowed themselves away. They found room enough to coil up their bodies under the berths where the sailors slept.

In the course of an hour, the ship was hauled out of the dock, and proceeded down the harbor, towed by the tug. About dark, the steamer cast her off; and she continued her course along the south shore of Long Island. The runaways were not very com-

fortable in their narrow quarters; and, as soon as the ship left the pier, some of the sailors came into the forecabin, and began to stow away their luggage. About the only place for it was under the bunks; and they jammed in their bags without regard to the bones of the stowaways. But the latter braced themselves up, and stood it till a second lot of the crew, released from duty, came into the house to stow away their effects. But by this time the tug had left the ship, and she was proceeding under sail. When the men came to crowd in another lot of bags under the bunks, Matt could not stand the pressure; and he yelled out like a good fellow.

“What’s all this?” cried a half-drunken sailor, as he pulled out all the bags; and then, seizing Matt by the leg, hauled him out.

“Let me alone!” screamed Matt, half frightened out of his wits; for he was afraid the seaman would knock his brains out.

“What are you doing in there, my little biscuit-nibbler?” demanded the old salt, as he tossed him rather roughly upon the deck.

“I’m not doing any thing,” cried Matt.

“You want to go to sea without paying your passage, do you? Well, my hearty, we always drown such youngsters; and overboard you shall go,” said the sailor. But it was plain enough to his companions that he was only trying to frighten the boy; and he was succeeding very well in his attempt.

In a few moments more, Lon was dragged out in

the same way ; but he did not yell as Matt had done. He was more disposed to show fight ; and he put the toe of his shoe into the shin of the man who held him. The seaman dropped him like a hot potato, and Lon rushed out of the house to the deck. Matt followed his example as soon as he could. They went forward, and then stowed themselves away under the topgallant forecastle. Matt had held on to his bundle of provision. The watch on deck did not see them, and they soon found a safe place. They ate their supper, and after a while went to sleep on the hard planks of the deck ; for both of them were very tired after the fatigues of the day and the preceding night. The last lot of sailors who had come into the house were the mate's watch ; and, as they had to be on duty from twelve at night, and were all more or less tipsy, they turned in without troubling themselves any further about the boys.

It was too cold for boys who had been used to a good bed in the house to sleep out in the open air, without even an overcoat to cover them. Before it was time for the mid-watch to come on deck, both of them were awake and shivering with the cold, though it was an August night. Matt declared that he could not stand it any longer, and he was going out on deck, even if they had to be sent on shore for it. Lon was glad enough to do the same thing, though he was not willing to be the first to propose it. The sailors of the captain's watch saw them as soon as they appeared ; and they were reported to the second mate, who had charge of the captain's watch.

“I know the captain, and it will be all right,” said Lon, as soon as they had told their story to the second mate.

“He was out on deck a few moments ago, and I am sure he hasn’t turned in yet. You will find him in the cabin. By the way, are you some of the passengers that are expected to come on board off here somewhere?”

“I didn’t know we were expected,” replied Lon.

The second mate showed them into the cabin. Of course Capt. Crogick was intensely astonished, and not at all delighted, to see them. The son of Capt. Trustleton must not see Mr. Wallgood when he came on board. But he gave them a state-room, and left the matter for the morning to decide.

CHAPTER XXV.

BOUND TO A SICKLY CLIMATE.

CAPT. CROGICK was a good deal more vexed at the appearance of these unwelcome passengers than he cared to express. He had treated them well; but he wished they were at the bottom of the sea, or anywhere except on board of the "Housatonic," which was to receive the cashier of the Walnut National Bank the next day. He wondered if the boys were not sent as spies, to ascertain what was going on on board of the ship; but, when he figured up his dates, he was satisfied that they were genuine runaways, as well as the cashier.

It seemed very strange that these boys should come on board of his ship just at this time when he was managing the escape of his brother-in-law. He at once made up his mind to send the young fugitives back to New York in the "Moonlight." But Capt. Bendig might convey his passengers to the ship before he knew the situation; and, if Lon saw Mr. Wallgood, the whole scheme would be exposed, especially his own agency in the affair, which was sure to make trouble with his owners.

Lon and Matt were permitted to sleep in peace for

that night, and in the morning they were invited to the captain's table to breakfast. It had been arranged beforehand, that Lon should do the talking; but the cabin-steward was present most of the time, and nothing was said during the meal about the presence of the two boys on board. As soon as the table was cleared away, and they were alone in the cabin, Capt. Crogick opened the subject.

"Where do you think of going to, Alonzo?" he asked.

"Matt and I wanted to take a little voyage," replied Lon, with a cheerful smile, as though he was engaged in a perfectly legitimate business. "We don't care much where we go to."

"Would you like to go to the coast of Africa, where men die off like sheep with malarial fever?" asked the captain, with a stern expression.

"No: we don't care about going to any such place as that," answered Lon, his jaw dropping at the question, which seemed to indicate that the "Housatonic" was bound to such a region as the shipmaster described. "We don't want to go to any such place as that. Is your ship going to the coast of Africa?"

"We shall certainly go to the coast of Africa," replied the captain; but he meant that part of the coast of Africa which borders the Strait of Gibraltar. "But your way of going to sea is not quite regular. As it stands now, you are stowaways."

"But we will pay our passage," added Lon.

"Then you have plenty of money?"

“We have some money.”

“Of course your father knows what you are about, Alonzo?” continued the captain.

“I can’t say he does.”

“Then you are runaways, are you?”

“I suppose that is what you would call us,” said Lon, trying to laugh, though the captain was very sober and dignified; but it was only because he was troubled about his expected passengers, who might meet the president’s son in spite of his efforts to prevent such a meeting.

“Your father would never forgive me if I took you on a voyage without his knowledge and consent.”

“He will never know it. We will not tell him what ship we went in; will we, Matt?”

“To be sure we will not,” answered the Swikes, who was ready to indorse all that his companion said.

“I think he would find it out, even if I were mean enough to do such a thing as to leave him to worry for months about you. No, my lads: I don’t like the idea of taking you to the coast of Africa, where you would be almost certain to have the fever, and almost as certain to die with it.”

“I don’t want to go to any such place,” protested Matt. “I would rather go to prison than to die with such a disease. Can’t you send us back, captain?”

“I may be able to do so: I will see. I may come across some in-bound vessel that will take you back

to New York, if you pay your fare," replied the master of the "Housatonic," pleased with the turn affairs had taken.

"I'm sure I don't want to go to any place where there is sickness," added Lon. "But we will pay our fare back if you will put us into another vessel."

"Have you money enough to pay your way back to Midhampton? because, if you have not, I will lend you some."

"I think we have enough, though I don't know how much it will be," added Lon.

"But you were going to pay your passage to the coast of Africa and back; and of course you have enough to carry you to New York," said the captain, who wished to know something about the finances of the runaways.

"I did not suppose the fare to the place where you are going would be more than forty or fifty dollars," replied Lon.

"Exactly so: then you must have at least a hundred dollars apiece; and that will more than take you back to New York."

"We haven't quite a hundred apiece," added Lon, giving all the information Capt. Crogick wished to obtain.

"You are quite flush for a couple of boys," said the shipmaster with a smile. "As your father didn't know you were coming, Alonzo, I suppose he did not give you this money."

Lon bit his lip; and now for the first time he

understood what the captain was driving at. He wanted to know where he got his money.

“My father didn’t give it to me; and I did not steal it. It was some money I have been saving up for years, for I always had plenty of money to spend,” replied Lon.

“It takes a good while for a boy to save up a hundred dollars.”

“I say I have been saving it for years, and for just this thing. You told me you ran away from home when you were a boy, and went to sea; and now you are the captain of a ship. Who knows but that I may be the captain of a ship?”

“I know you will not. I didn’t run away from a good home such as you have; and I did not crawl in at the cabin window, as you are trying to do. I suppose this other boy saved up his money in the same way,” continued the captain, turning to Matt.

“Yes, sir, every cent of it,” protested Matt, who was willing to swear to any thing that Lon said.

“I don’t know that I ever saw this boy before,” added Capt. Crogick, fixing his gaze upon Matt; “but, when you tell me he is the son of Obed Swikes, I know his father never gave him much money to spend.”

“But I made most of it myself,” added Matt, who realized the full force of the master’s argument; for it was easier to squeeze milk out of a paving-stone than to get any money out of his father to spend for fun and frolic. “I used to pick berries, and sell them. I used to do jobs for folks about town.”

"The story is rather thin for both of you. I don't believe it," added Capt. Crogick bluntly.

"It's as true as preaching," said Matt.

"As true as some preaching, I have no doubt."

"Do you think I would lie about it?" demanded Lon, beginning to mount the high horse he sometimes rode.

"I rather think you would lie about it when you got into a tight place, as you are now."

"We have told the truth; and it don't make any difference to me whether you believe me or not," replied Lon, when he found it was no use to attempt to bluff the captain of the "Housatonic."

"Be that as it may, I shall not meddle with the matter: I have no time to attend to it, even if I were disposed to do so. When I get a chance, I shall send you back to New York; and you can settle it with your fathers," added the captain, as he rose from his stool, and went out upon deck.

"He smokes the whole thing," said Lon, as soon as they were alone.

"I know he does; but what was the use of telling him how much money we had?" demanded Matt, who was sure his companion had been guilty of very bad generalship.

"I didn't mean to do it; but it will make no difference now, for he is going off on a long voyage, and he may die of the fever he talks about."

"Our fun is spoiled for this time," added Matt, who seemed to deplore this as much as being found out.

“No, it isn’t. We shall return to New York in a day or two. We shall have a first-rate sail in this ship; and, when we get back, we can take a steamer for some place where no one will know us, and have a good time there. We are not licked out yet. Come, let’s go on deck, and see the fun.”

They left the cabin; and for a time they enjoyed the movements of the big vessel, which was rolling along under easy sail, for the captain was on the lookout for the yacht which was to bring off his passengers. But they soon wearied of this monotonous life, and wished for something more active. It was as dull as any thing could be; and they made up their minds that they could not have stood it for a voyage of four or five weeks. They saw a great many vessels far to the south of them, bound to the westward; and they wondered that Capt. Crogick did not run down to one of them, and send them back, as he said he should do. They were all ready to return before it was noon; and in the afternoon they were anxious to do so.

Towards night, they saw the “Moonlight” astern of the ship, and noticed that the captain frequently examined her with his glass. Then they made out the revenue-cutter, and they saw the captain looking at her a great deal. Lon thought the shipmaster was very anxious about something; for he would hardly speak a civil word to him, when he asked him a question. At sunset, when the calm came on, the captain was more gruff than ever; and he seemed

to be very nervous. After dark the cutter ran alongside of her; and her captain wanted to know what the ship was doing so near the island. Her papers were examined; but they were found to be all right. The officer apologized for boarding the "Housatonic;" and the cutter left her.

Early in the evening Lon and Matt turned in, for the want of something better to do. The ship did not move; and every thing was as still as death. The boys slept very well, better than the captain, — so well that at daylight they could sleep no more, though they remained in their berths.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ANOTHER UNEXPECTED MEETING.

WADE BROOKS had his supper, by the grace of Pollish, in the kitchen, so that he was not obliged to appropriate a part of the captain's meal, as he had of his breakfast and dinner. At an early hour in the evening, he turned into a spare bunk in the fore-castle; for it was not necessary for him to seek his hiding-place. He slept well, and he did not wake as early as the runaways on board of the "Housatonic." Wade could sleep twelve hours a night when he had nothing better to do; and he did it on this occasion.

Capt. Bendig had not slept as well. He had been on deck half the night, looking out for an opportunity to communicate with the "Housatonic." He had not been in his berth more than an hour at a time; and this was calculated to make him cross on the following day, for no one feels good after he has been up half the night. He was on deck at daylight, when a little breeze came up from the eastward, which was not fair for the yacht or the ship. But the "Moonlight" was under way as soon as the breeze swelled her sails. She barely moved, and it

would take her some time to beat up to the "Housatonic."

The revenue-cutter was about two miles farther to the westward than she had been the night before. She seemed to be on a mission of some kind, and to be determined to remain near this particular locality. If there had been a good wind, the yacht would have followed the "Housatonic" to some part of the sea where the cutter could not notice her movements. But the ship could do nothing in that light head wind, though she had braced her yards so as to lay a course to the south-east. She had no perceptible motion as she was seen from the deck of the yacht.

When the "Moonlight" had been under way half an hour, a boat put off from the "Housatonic," and pulled rapidly towards the yacht. In a short time it came alongside, and Capt. Crogick sprang upon upon her deck. As he did so, he cast an anxious glance astern in the direction of the cutter, but he appeared to think she was too far off to see what he was about; for doubtless he did not care to have her officers know that he had boarded the "Moonlight."

"Things don't work well," said he, when he had satisfied himself in regard to the revenue steamer.

"That's a fact. What do you suppose that cutter is doing out here?" asked Capt. Bendig.

"I don't know. She boarded me last night; but I am sure she don't know what we are about. Did she hail you?"

"No. She has not been much nearer to the yacht

than she is now. It is very likely she is on the lookout for some smuggler or filibuster. Those fellows don't often explain their business."

"That's not all, either," continued Capt. Crogick. "About six bells last night, the second mate dug out a couple of stowaways; and who do you think they are?"

"I don't think I could guess," replied Capt. Bendig.

"One of them was the son of the president of the bank of which your passenger is the cashier," added Capt. Crogick.

"Whew!" whistled the captain of the "Moonlight." "That's bad."

"Of course it is; and we must not let these stowaways see the cashier or any of the family."

"That's so. Last night was a good one for stowaways, for I had one; but he is nothing but a wharf-rat, I think, that came on board to sleep."

"I shall send these two boys back to New York in your yacht; and I have come on board of you to warn you. When I send them to the 'Moonlight,' you must keep your passengers in the cabin, and then lock these stowaways up in a state-room, or some other place, where it is not possible for them to know what is going on."

"All right," replied Capt. Bendig. "We can manage it very well."

"There's no trouble at all about it, if we only understand each other; but it would have been bad

if you had sent Wallgood and his wife on board of the ship when these two young cubs were on deck; and it would have been just as bad if I had sent the boys to you. We have the matter well in hand now, and there is nothing more to fear," continued the master of the "Housatonic." "As soon as I return to the ship, I shall send these boys to you: so see that every thing is fixed for them. As soon as you have locked them into a room, send the cashier, his wife and mine, back in the same boat."

"All right. It shall be done; and I will see that nothing goes wrong."

Capt. Crogick returned to his boat, and the men pulled back to the ship.

When he reached the "Housatonic," he found the stowaways had not yet turned out, and he sent the steward to call them. They were not sorry to find a chance to return to New York, and they soon completed their toilets. They were handed into the boat, and were soon on board of the "Moonlight." The cabin of the yacht was closed and locked when they came on deck.

Capt. Bendig's state-room was chosen for their prison, and they were conducted to it as soon as they came on board. They were taken down by the fore-hatch, for the door leading from the room into the cabin had been fastened before. The captain, without any explanations, shoved them into the room, and locked the door upon them; and there was no opening by which they could see out of the

den, for it was only dimly lighted by blocks of glass in the deck.

“What does all this mean?” demanded Lon, as the door was locked upon them.

“We are locked in,” replied Matt.

“I know it; but what is it for?”

“Perhaps the captain thinks we may get back to the ship.”

“I understand it,” added Lon, with a sudden flash of intelligence. “The captain of the ‘Housatonic’ believes we stole the money; and he is going to send us back to Midhampton by this vessel.”

“Then the game is all up, and all our fun is spoiled again,” replied Matt, disgusted with the situation.

“Here is a good bed; and we may as well turn in, and make the best of it. By and by, if they don’t let us out, we will smash that door down, and raise Cain generally,” added Lon, as he stretched himself on the bed in the berth.

When he had locked his prisoners into the room, Capt. Bendig hurried his passengers out of the cabin into the boat that was waiting for them. All their baggage was put into the boat with them, and in a few moments more they were on their way to the “Housatonic;” confident that they were out of danger now, for the cutter was still two miles distant.

As soon as they were gone, and he had fulfilled his contract with the master of the “Housatonic,” he gave orders for the yacht to be put about, and headed to the westward. He hardly gave a second thought

to the prisoners in his state-room. He had no instruction in regard to them, except to land them in New York. The breeze freshened a little, and the "Moonlight" began to move through the water at a livelier pace.

By this time Wade Brooks had slept all he could; and he left his bunk in the fore-castle. When he learned from Pollish that the captain was at his breakfast in the cabin, he ventured to go on deck. In the distance he saw the "Housatonic," standing to the south-west; and Pollish told him the passengers had gone on board of her.

"The captain is at his breakfast; but as soon as he is done he will want to see you, my lad," said the steward. "You had better get something to eat while you have a chance to do so; for you may not get another to-day."

Wade was not a fellow to neglect an opportunity of this kind: he went down to the galley, where Pollish gave him all he could eat. While he was at his breakfast, he heard a pounding on the door of the captain's state-room. Lon and Matt had stood the monotony of the state-room as long as they could, and the former had put his plan into execution. He was going to break down the door if no one let them out.

"Pollish!" shouted the captain.

"Here, sir," replied the steward, hastening to the cabin by the door through the pantry, which was between the cabin and the kitchen.

“What is that noise?” asked Capt. Bendig, when the steward appeared.

“The two boys in your state-room, sir,” replied Polish. “They want to get out, I suppose.”

“Let them out, and then give them some breakfast,” added the captain.

He was very considerate of the ship’s stowaways, — more so than of his own; but one of the former was the son of a rich man, and that made all the difference in the world. As the skipper of the “Moonlight” was on the make, it is not unlikely that he thought he might turn the presence of the boys on board his vessel to account. He judged that the father of one of them would be glad to give something handsome to get him back to his home. It might even pay to take them up the river in the yacht to their residence; or he could go on shore at Staten Island, and telegraph to the boy’s father, and then present his bill. But, if the captain made any such calculations as these, they were upset by his own folly and breach of faith.

Pollish obeyed his order, and released Lon and Matt by the door at which they had been admitted to their temporary prison.

“Why were we locked up in that room?” demanded Lon, as he confronted the steward at the open door.

“I don’t know. You must ask the captain: he did it himself, and he don’t tell his crew what he does things for,” replied Polish.

"We want some breakfast," growled Lon.

"You shall have some at once. Come into the kitchen," said Pollish.

Lon and Matt followed him. Wade was seated at a table, picking the meat from the bone of a mutton-chop. Lon looked at him as though he had been a ghost; and Wade looked at the two runaways with a similar expression of surprise.

"By hokey! how came you here, Matt?" demanded Wade, almost overwhelmed by the sight of him.

"How came you here?" repeated Matt.

"I believe you are an evil spirit, Wade Brooks," added Lon: "you follow us wherever we go."

Pollish deemed it best to inform the captain that the boys knew each other.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ESCAPED OVERBOARD.

“**H**OW in creation came you on board of this vessel, Wade Brooks?” repeated Matt, when he had found a tongue.

“How in creation came you on board of this vessel, Matt Swikes?” demanded Wade. “I thought you meant to stop at that big hotel a while. Did you spend all your money, and then have to go to sea?”

“No: we didn’t spend all our money; but we thought we would take a little cruise at sea,” replied Matt. “But when we heard the ship was going to the coast of Africa, where they have the fever very bad, we gave it up; and now we are going back to New York. Have you gone to work on this vessel?”

“No, I have not: I wish I could,” replied Wade.

“The captain says the two young gentlemen are to have their breakfast in the cabin,” interposed Polish at this moment. “Won’t you come with me?”

Lon thought it was quite proper that they should be invited to the cabin; and he was ready to follow the steward without wasting a moment upon such a

fellow as Wade Brooks. Pollish led them through the captain's room into the cabin, where Capt. Bendig received them very politely. He gave them places at the table, and told the steward to bring the best there was on board for their meal.

"The steward tells me you know that boy we have on board," said the captain, when the two guests were seated at the table.

"Yes, sir: we knew him in Midhampton, where we came from; but we don't know any good of him. He ran away from the folks he lived with, and was charged with stealing two hundred dollars from them. Isn't that so, Matt?" replied Lon, who was certainly a swift witness.

"That's just the idea I formed of him," added Capt. Bendig. "But I took him for a wharf-rat. He stowed himself away on board of the yacht, and tried to steal a passage; and he did steal my breakfast and part of my dinner."

"I think they would like to see him in Midhampton," said Lon.

Pollish was attending to the table, and heard all that was said by the captain and the two runaways. As soon as he had given the boys their breakfast, he told Wade what he had heard, — that they said he was a runaway, and that he was charged with stealing two hundred dollars.

"The coat fits them, and it don't fit me," replied Wade indignantly. "It was Matt Swikes that stole the money, and both of them ran away from home. I have no home to run away from."

“But the captain is down upon you, and he likes to believe what those two fellows say. He always believes what suits him best; and, as soon as you have finished your breakfast, I think you had better put yourself out of sight,” said Pollish. “And don’t let any of the hands see you do it.”

“I will take care,” replied Ward.

He had about finished the meal, when he received this advice from the steward. He went to the fore-castle; and, having assured himself that no one was in it, he stowed himself away under the berth, in the place which the steward had indicated for him. He arranged the old clothes so as to conceal him from any one who came into the fore-castle; but he had not much faith in his fortress if a thorough search should be made for him. He lay down, and began to think of the events of the day. The runaways seemed to be in high favor with the captain: they had his ear. They had already told bad stories about him, which were all lies; but he did not care for this if he could only get out of the yacht. He had an immense sum of money in his pocket; and this time he would take care not to let any one steal it from him.

As soon as Capt. Bendig had finished his breakfast, he told Pollish to call Wade Brooks: he wanted to see him. The steward did call him, but he did not answer. He went into every part of the yacht; but Wade did not appear. He reported to the captain that he could not find the boy. Lon and Matt were

with the captain on deck by this time; and they seemed to be greatly interested in the search.

“Pollish, I believe you are in league with that boy,” said the captain. “Now I want him, he can’t be found.”

“The last time I saw him he was in the kitchen, eating his breakfast,” replied Pollish. “Then, when I went to look for him, he was not there.”

“He hasn’t left the vessel; and, if you don’t find him very soon, I shall see what I can do about it,” added the skipper of the “Moonlight.”

Pollish visited every part of the yacht again; but, of course, with no better success than before. By this time the breeze had freshened into a steady wind, and the “Moonlight” was going along at the rate of four or five knots an hour. He hoped the yacht would reach New York before the boy was found; for he was afraid he might tell under pressure how he got into the vessel, and this would cause him to be discharged. Pollish reported to the captain that he could not find the stowaway.

Capt. Bendig called his mate and several of the hands, and directed them to search the forecabin while he looked through the cabin. The mate searched the bunks, and the space under them; and, when he came to the forward one on the starboard side, of course he pulled out the fugitive.

By this time the captain had satisfied himself that the boy was not in the cabin; and he was in his stateroom when he was informed by the mate that Wade had been found.

“I knew the young scamp could not be far off,” said the captain, and he followed the mate into the forecandle. “So you have come out of your hole.”

“No, sir; I did not: I was pulled out,” replied Wade.

“You may go on deck,” added the skipper to the mate and the men.

In a moment more Wade was alone with the captain in the forecandle. He looked ugly; and the poor boy concluded that the time had come for his flogging. He did not like the idea of being flogged; and he did not mean to submit if he could possibly escape.

“I have you now where I want you,” said Capt. Bendig.

“Then I suppose you want me in here,” added Wade, for the want of something better to say.

“Yes, I want you in here. I promised the gentleman who was fool enough to give you some money, that I would not flog you for stealing my breakfast and dinner. I am a man of my word, and I’m not going to flog you for that; but I’m going to flog you for hiding away when I wanted you,” said Capt. Bendig, making a spring at the boy.

Wade dodged, and attempted to get by the skipper and reach the door of the forecandle, so that he could escape to the deck. But the tyrant, as he had proved himself to be, caught him by the leg, and held him fast.

“Now I have you in hand, there is one other

thing I have to settle with you," said Capt. Bendig, transferring his hold from the leg to the collar of his prisoner.

Wade struggled with all his might to get away; but the skipper held him as in a vise. When the victim struggled, the captain tightened his grasp, and shook his prisoner, till Wade was glad to hold still.

"You have a hundred dollars that belongs to me," said the captain, when Wade had been still for a moment.

"It don't belong to you," protested Wade; and the fear of losing the treasure was vastly more terrible than the fear of getting the flogging.

"Do you think I am going to see a little scalawag like you steal into this vessel, and get a hundred dollars for it?" demanded the skipper savagely. "That would be giving you a reward for your rascality."

"The gentleman gave me the money because he wanted me to keep still," sobbed Wade, exhausted by his violent exertions.

"I don't care what he gave it to you for: that job was mine; and all the pay for it comes to me."

"I told him I would keep still if I was allowed to keep the money; and I won't without," said Wade spunkily.

"I haven't any time to talk about it: I have said what I mean; and now will you give me the money, or shall I take it from you?" demanded the skipper savagely.

“I won’t give it to you ; and it is stealing for you to take it from me,” protested Wade with all the strength of his lungs.

The captain did not wait for any thing more : he threw his prisoner on the floor, and, after a short search through his pockets, found the old wallet in which Wade had put the money. He took it from him ; and, while his victim was getting up from the floor, he put it in his pocket. At this moment the mate came to the door. As he opened it, Wade made a dive through it.

“Stop him !” shouted the captain.

But it was too late : Wade had gained the deck.

“What did you open that door for ?” said the skipper angrily.

“I wanted to report to you that that revenue-steamer is bearing down upon us, and, for aught I know, means to board us,” replied the mate.

“Why didn’t you report it before ?”

“I came down here ; but you seemed to be busy, and I did not like to disturb you,” answered the mate with a smile.

“Is she headed for the yacht ?” inquired the captain ; and he appeared to be anxious on the subject.

“She seems to be doing so.”

“Do you suppose her people saw the ‘Housatonic’s’ boat carry off those passengers ?”

“If they used their glasses, they couldn’t well help seeing it,” replied the mate, who did not seem to be at all troubled about the matter. “What odds

does it make if they did? I suppose the transaction was all right, wasn't it?"

"Of course it was. But where is that boy?"

"He went on deck."

Capt. Bendig, afraid that Wade would tell the other two stowaways what he had seen, hastened on deck to secure him again. He saw the cutter was headed directly towards the "Moonlight." Wade stood in the waist, with both eyes open. The skipper was intent on catching him again, intending to lock him into his state-room until the cutter had passed, and then give him the promised flogging. Wade retreated towards the stern, and then around the mast to the forecastle.

"Stop, you little villain!" said he. "You will get an extra flogging for this."

When Wade saw he could not escape, he leaped upon the rail, and then jumped overboard.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE LORDS OF THE SEA.

WADE BROOKS did not take to the water from mere impulse, and because he saw no other way to escape from the captain of the "Moonlight." In the morning, when the cutter seemed to attract some attention on board of the yacht, he had asked something about her; for he had no more idea of a revenue-cutter than a baby has. Pollish told him that she was a kind of missionary vessel, which not only caught the rogues that attempted to cheat the government, but she assisted vessels in distress, and looked out for all violations of the laws on the water. If the crew of a ship mutinied, she was ready to step in, and make the men do their duty; in a word, she was to serve the government and individuals as best she could.

From this description of her, Wade concluded that he ought to find friends on board of her. He knew that the "Housatonic" was bearing away a man who had cheated a bank—a national bank—out of a hundred thousand dollars. He had been robbed of his hundred dollars, and he did not feel obliged to keep his secret any longer. Though Mr.

Wallgood had treated him very well, still he was a robber of the bank ; and, if his secret was betrayed, he must blame Capt. Bendig for it. He had only agreed to keep the secret if he was allowed to retain the money, which Capt. Bendig had not permitted him to do.

But the skipper had not intended to give him a flogging while the cutter was so near the yacht, lest the cries of the victim should be heard on board of her. His only purpose had been to catch Wade, and lock him up in the fore-castle or some other place on board, so that he could not have a talk with the son of the bank-president. If Lon Trustleton ascertained that the " Moonlight " had been used to convey the defaulter on board of a ship, the fact might come to the knowledge of his owner ; and he knew what would follow. His place was his bread and butter, as much as that of the cook or steward ; and it was not easy to obtain such positions as he held.

If Capt. Bendig had supposed that Wade Brooks had pluck enough to jump overboard, he would have handled him more carefully. The stowaway soon proved himself to be a good swimmer ; for he struck out from the yacht, which sailed away and left him astern of her. But, as soon as the captain realized the situation, he ordered the yacht to be hove to.

" Hard down the helm ! " he shouted to the man at the wheel.

But he had hardly given the order before he saw, that, if it was obeyed, the " Moonlight " would run

into the cutter, which was now just abreast of her. The steamer had "slowed down" some time before. She immediately stopped her screw, and then backed till she came to a full stop. Half a dozen of her uniformed seamen were already in one of her quarter-boats, ready to drop it into the water; but this was unnecessary, for Wade had swam towards the cutter, and as soon as she stopped he was alongside of her. He saw the accommodation ladder at her quarter, and he made for that. A stout quartermaster was at the foot of the ladder with a rope in his hand; and with his assistance Wade soon climbed to the deck of the cutter.

The officer of the deck asked him no questions, but directed one of the stewards to take him below, and fit him out with dry clothes, and then bring him on deck again. By this time the "Moonlight" had come about, and was lying to a short distance from the cutter. The men in the quarter-boat were ordered to lower away; and an officer was sent in it to the yacht, which was evidently suspected of doing something out of the way. Capt. Bendig received the officer in the most courteous manner.

"Will you explain your object in communicating with that ship?" said the officer, opening the subject of his visit.

"Certainly: her captain is an old friend of mine; and, as we were both becalmed, he paid me a friendly visit," replied Capt. Bendig.

"Did you come out here for the purpose of receiving this friendly visit?" continued the officer.

“No, sir: I brought off the captain’s wife, if you must know the whole of it,” said the captain of the “Moonlight.” “She lived in the country, and did not reach New York in season to come out in the ship. Though I don’t know any thing about it, I think it is more likely than not that the owners of the ship objected to his taking her on the voyage as a passenger, and he did not care to have her come on board before she left the pier. Of course you will regard what I say as told you in confidence; for I don’t wish to get my friend the captain into trouble with his owners.”

“What sort of cargo did you receive from her?” asked the officer.

“No cargo at all: the ship is just out of New York,” replied the captain of the yacht. “Do you think she has smuggled any thing out of the country?”

“No; but I have known a vessel to keep her contraband goods on board till she was ready to sail on another voyage, and then ship them into some gentleman’s private yacht. I want to seize one such pleasure-craft,” added the officer.

“Well, sir, you can make a beginning with the ‘Moonlight,’” laughed Capt. Bendig, delighted to find that the revenue-officer did not suspect the true nature of his business with the “Housatonic.” “I think her owner can fight his own battle as well as any of them.”

“I don’t say that any thing of this kind has been

done; but the captain of the cutter directs me to ascertain your errand with that ship," added the lieutenant.

"Well, sir, I have told you my errand; and I don't know that I have done any thing to violate the laws of the United States," added Capt. Bendig, beginning to bluster a little.

"I don't know that you have: I came to ascertain. It becomes my duty to search your vessel," continued the officer.

"You can do that as much as you please; and I can tell you in the beginning that you will find no smuggled goods on board," said Capt. Bendig, with more pertness than the occasion required.

The officer called certain men from his boat, and a thorough search was made of the "Moonlight." Her skipper made a great show of opening every locker, closet, and trunk, where it was possible to conceal a piece of silk or a box of cigars. Of course nothing was found, and the captain crowed accordingly.

"I hope you are satisfied," said the skipper, when the search was completed.

"Entirely satisfied," replied the courteous officer. "I am very sorry to have troubled you."

"It is not much trouble to me; but I will take care to inform my owner that his yacht has been searched for contraband goods," said Capt. Bendig, who could not resist the opportunity to bully when occasion offered.

"Of course you are at liberty to do that, as I am

to inform the owners of the 'Housatonic' that you conveyed the captain's wife on board of her; and possibly your owner would like to know the fact," replied the revenue-officer, who was very much disgusted with the tone and manner of the captain.

"You have me there," said Capt. Bendig, with a coarse grin; "and I think we had better both hold our tongues."

"Just as you please: I don't often go out of my way to meddle with private affairs: I have only done my duty in this case, and you can tell whom you please about it."

The officer was really sorry that he found nothing on board of the yacht, for he was human enough to desire to see such an ill-natured fellow as the captain of the "Moonlight" get into a scrape.

"I want you to send that boy you picked up in the water back again to the vessel from which he escaped," said the skipper, as the officer was about to return to his boat.

"Does he belong to the yacht?" asked the officer.

"No: he's nothing but a wharf-rat: he broke into this vessel night before last, and I owe him a licking for it," grinned the captain, as though it would be a pleasant thing for him to bestow the castigation.

The officer's sympathies were with the boy; and he was willing to do any thing in his power to save any human being from falling into the clutches of such a brute as he saw the master of the "Moonlight" to be.

“How happened he to fall overboard?” asked the revenue-officer.

“He didn’t fall overboard: he jumped over.”

“Well, what made him jump overboard?”

“To get rid of the licking he deserved, I suppose. He is a young scamp that ran away from the place in the country where he lived; and I intend to have him sent back,” replied Capt. Bendig.

“I will report the matter to the captain; and he will do what he thinks proper,” added the officer.

“See here, I don’t want no fooling over this case. I want the boy sent back at once. You are not the lords of the sea, if you are in a revenue-cutter. You haven’t any claim on that boy, and I want him sent back,” blustered Capt. Bendig.

“Do you know to whom you are talking?” said the officer. “We do not take any orders from any but the government.”

“I want the boy; that’s all I’ve got to say about it; and, if you don’t send him, you’ll have a bone to pick with my owner, who has some influence in Washington. Some things can be done as well as others.”

“I will report what you say to the captain of the cutter; and it is probable that he will not be bullied into sending the boy back,” replied the officer indignantly. “If you want the boy, you had better send for him; for I am quite confident the captain will not trouble himself to send him back, after your insulting message.”

“You young squirts of officers think you are the

lords of the sea ; and you talk to men like me as if we were of no consequence," growled Capt. Bendig.

" I treated you like a gentleman till you proved that you were not one."

The revenue-officer went over the side into his boat ; but, just as he was ordering his crew to shove off, he discovered another boat pulling from the cutter. In a few moments it was alongside of the " Moonlight."

" Mr. Wilkins, by order of the captain of the cutter, you will take possession of this yacht, and hold her till further orders," said the officer of the boat, touching his cap to his superior.

Mr. Wilkins was glad to receive the order.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CAPT. BENDIG'S BLUNDER.

MR. WILKINS immediately returned to the deck of the "Moonlight," attended this time by eight seamen, part of whom had come from the cutter in the second boat.

"Well, sir, what do you want now?" demanded Capt. Bendig, as Mr. Wilkins stepped upon the deck.

"I am ordered to take possession of this vessel, and to hold her till further orders," replied the naval officer.

"What's that for?" asked the astonished skipper, taken all aback by the announcement.

"I don't know. I obey orders, and ask no questions about things that do not concern me.—Stand by to lower the foresail!" added Wilkins to his men, as soon as they were on the deck of the "Moonlight."

"I call this high-handed!" exclaimed the captain; but he was not quite so crank as he had been.

"You can call it what you please," replied the lieutenant of the cutter, as his men gathered at the foresail halyards. "Lower away!"

"Can't you tell me what this is for?" demanded

Capt. Bendig, as he realized that the command of the yacht had passed out of his hands.

"I cannot. I don't know, and I don't care," answered Wilkins curtly.

"I don't understand it," added Capt. Bendig.

"Neither do I; but, if anybody understands it, you ought to. I should judge the order comes on account of some information that boy has given; but I don't know any thing about it," added Wilkins; and he seemed to enjoy the chagrin of the captain. "No information has been conveyed to the commander of the cutter by any other person."

"Would the captain of the cutter hear what a little scalawag like that boy has to say?" demanded the skipper of the "Moonlight," disgusted with this view of the question.

"The commander of the cutter knows what he is about; and, if the boy tells the truth, he will hear him as readily as any other person," replied Wilkins.

The lieutenant of the cutter then ordered his men to anchor the yacht. When it was done, he took the most comfortable seat he could find, and gave himself up to the reading of a newspaper. He was perfectly at home; for the yacht, for the time being, was under his command. He did not care to talk any more with the captain, or with anybody else.

Capt. Bendig was utterly cast down. He began to realize that he had made a blunder in treating the "wharf-rat" in the manner he had. When he saw the cutter coming, he had gone among the men, and

given each of them fifty dollars of the money he had received for them. He was of the opinion that this was enough for them, and he proposed to keep the other fifty himself; for he had made the bargain with the principals, and the men did not know that one hundred had been paid for each one of them.

But, in order to understand the action of the commander of the cutter, we must return to Wade Brooks, who by this time was clothed in a suit of dry clothes. The steward, who had him in charge, took good care of him, and conducted him to the quarter-deck as soon as he was in condition to see the captain.

Wade was not a little abashed when he found himself in the presence of the commander, who was dressed in uniform, and looked like a greater man than even the captain of the militia company in his native town, who had always filled him with awe and reverence. He looked at him, and was glad to find that he did not look a bit like Capt. Bendig. He did not put on any airs, and actually bestowed a smile upon him.

"Well, young man, have you been taking a cold bath this chilly day?" said he, smiling again.

"The bath was better than the licking," replied Wade, shrugging his shoulders. "I hope you don't think of sending me back to Capt. Bendig, who is the hardest man I ever met in my life."

"That will depend upon circumstances. Do you belong on board of that yacht?" asked the captain.

“No, sir: I do not belong to her. If I did, I would drown myself,” replied Wade, with energy.

“How happened you to fall overboard?”

“I didn’t fall over: I jumped over.”

“What did you do that for?”

“Because the captain was going to lick me for nothing; and I would not stand it.”

“What is your name?”

“Wade Brooks, sir. What is yours?”

The captain and an officer near him laughed outright at the simplicity of the boy; and it was evident that he came from the country.

“You may call me Capt. Singleton; and that is my name,” said the captain, when he had recovered his gravity. “Now, Wade Brooks, what was the captain of the yacht going to flog you for?”

“For nothing at all. He promised Mr. Wallgood that he would not flog me for taking his breakfast and part of his dinner. He would not whip me for this; but he said he should give it to me for hiding in the fore-castle when he wanted to whip me.”

Capt. Singleton seated himself on a stool, and continued to question Wade till he had drawn from him his whole history since he came from Midhampton, and up to the time he went on board of the “Moonlight.”

“Do you know what the yacht is doing out here?” asked the captain.

“Yes, sir, I do.”

“Well, what is she doing out here?”

“The cashier of the Walnut National Bank in Midhampton has run away with one hundred thousand dollars; and the yacht came out here to put him on board of that ship,” replied Wade, pointing to the “Housatonic,” which was not more than three or four miles distant; for she had tacked, and was standing up to the north-east.

“Do you mean that he stole the money?” inquired Capt. Singleton, deeply interested in the matter.

“Yes, sir, that’s what I mean. His name is Mr. Wallgood, and he is the brother-in-law of the captain of the ship. He went on board with his wife, and the wife of the captain of the ship; and the two women are sisters.”

“Are you sure you are telling me the truth?” asked the commander of the cutter.

“Dead sure of it, sir; and, if you go to the ship, you will find Mr. Wallgood on board of her, with his wife and Mrs. Crogick, who is her sister.”

“You said that before,” said the captain.

“The cashier gave the men on the yacht a hundred dollars apiece to keep still about it; and I don’t know what he gave the captain of the ‘Moonlight,’ continued Wade, not a little excited. “He gave me a hundred dollars too; but Capt. Bendig took it away from me.”

“And that’s the reason you are telling about the matter, I suppose,” added Capt. Singleton.

“I told Mr. Wallgood I would keep still if I was allowed to keep the money; and, as the captain did

not allow me to keep it, I am willing to tell all I know about the case," answered Wade.

"I see; and the captain of the yacht made a mistake when he took the money away from you," laughed the commander.

"I didn't mean to meddle with any thing that did not concern me," said Wade.

"Didn't you say you would not take any of the money the two boys had?"

"Yes, sir: I wouldn't have any thing to do with the money Matt Swikes stole from his father."

"But you were willing to take some of the money the cashier stole. How is this?" asked Capt. Singleton.

"I didn't think any thing about it. Do you suppose the hundred dollars was a part of the money he stole from the bank?" asked Wade, with a look of anxiety on his face; for this was the first time he had thought about the subject.

"I should suppose so, though I know nothing about it."

"I had an idea that the hundred thousand dollars he took from the bank was all fixed up some other way. I heard him tell his wife about it; but I couldn't understand it. Somehow he was to get the money when he got to Italy. At any rate, I didn't think the money he gave me had any thing to do with what he stole: if I had, I wouldn't have taken it."

"And you say the two boys are on board of that yacht?"

"Yes, sir; and one of them is the son of Capt. Trustleton, the president of the bank," replied Wade.

"His son, is he? What did he say when he saw the cashier of his father's bank on board of the yacht?"

"He did not see him. Capt. Bendig locked the two boys into his state-room till the cashier and his wife had gone on board of the 'Housatonic.'"

Capt. Singleton sent the officer to direct Mr. Wilkins to take possession of the yacht. He wanted her captain to be where he could find him. He questioned Wade for half an hour longer, and then he sent a boat to bring Lon Trustleton on board.

"He will tell you hard stories about me; but they are not true," said Wade, when the boat had gone.

"I will hear what he has to say. Did you tell the president's son that the cashier had gone on board of the ship?" asked Capt. Singleton.

"No, sir: I had no chance, for the captain kept them out of my way. He took them into the cabin."

When Lon Trustleton came on board of the cutter, he looked very much scared. Mr. Wilkins had put him into the boat in spite of the protest of Capt. Bendig.

"If that fellow has been saying any thing bad about me, it is all a lie," said Lon, almost as soon as he touched the deck, and saw the captain and Wade talking together.

"Never mind that just now, my lad," interposed the commander. "You will answer my questions:

and be sure you speak the truth. Do you know a man by the name of Wallgood?"

"Yes, sir, I do: he is the cashier of the Walnut National Bank, and my father is president of it," replied Lon, his face brightening up; for the question did not seem to affect him in any bad way.

"Where is Mr. Wallgood now?" inquired Capt. Singleton, in a very indifferent way.

"In Midhampton, I suppose."

"Have you seen him to-day?"

"No, sir: of course I haven't. I have been on the water all day," replied Lon, puzzled at the questions put to him.

"Should you know him if you saw him?"

"Certainly I should: I used to see him about every day."

"That's all now. — Go ahead," added the captain to an officer; and the cutter was headed for the "Housatonic."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SEARCH AND THE ARREST.

IN a few moments the cutter was going through the water at her highest rate of speed. No doubt Capt. Bendig understood what she was about when he saw her headed towards the "Housatonic." Very likely he would have made an end of Wade Brooks, if he could have laid his hands upon him at that moment; but Wade was safe for the present. Lon Trustleton was vexed and perplexed to know the meaning of the strange questions the commander of the cutter had put to him; and he had no idea where the steamer was going, though Wade comprehended the matter fully.

"Where are we going now, Wade Brooks?" asked Lon, after he had tried in vain to solve the mystery of the situation.

"You must ask the captain, if you want to know any thing about it," replied Wade coldly.

"You needn't be so stiff about it."

"I don't run this vessel; and the captain of her hasn't told me what he is going to do," added Wade.

"I didn't suppose he had; but the captain of the

yacht says you have been telling him something," continued Lon.

"I have told him a great many things; and he has told me some."

"I dare say he thinks a good deal of you, Wade Brooks," said Lon, with a sneer.

"I think he is one of the sort that will give a fellow fair play. He isn't such a fellow as the captain of that yacht. You made friends with him; and I don't believe he was willing to have you leave his vessel," said Wade.

"What makes you think so?" asked Lon, whose curiosity was excited.

"I think he will take you back to your father, and then charge him a good price for doing it."

Capt. Bendig had protested against his being taken to the cutter; but he did not know the reason. Lon was satisfied that Wade knew what was going on, and why he had been sent for. He asked him a great many questions, all of which he refused to answer. If the captain wanted him to know what he was about, he could tell him: Wade would not. But the steamer was going at a rapid rate through the water; and, as the "Housatonic" was not making more than four knots an hour, the two vessels were soon within speaking distance.

"Heave to!" shouted the captain of the cutter as he ran his vessel under the stern of the "Housatonic."

"What do you want now?" demanded Capt. Crogick.

The commander of the cutter repeated his order, and the master of the ship did not deem it prudent to disregard it. A boat was lowered from the cutter; and an officer was sent in it to the ship.

“What is it now?” asked Capt. Crogick, as the lieutenant came upon the deck of the “Housatonic.” “You overhauled this ship last night.”

“I know we did; but this time we want to inquire into another matter,” replied the officer, whose name was Graves. “Have you any passengers on board?”

Capt. Crogick was taken all aback at this question. He had sent his lady passengers into their state-rooms, and had directed the cashier to conceal himself elsewhere, so that they should not be seen; and he had not looked for any trouble in this direction.

“You visited my ship before, and looked her all over; and you did not find any passengers,” replied he.

“You do not answer my question,” replied Mr. Graves. “Have you any passengers on board?”

“Did you find any passengers on board when you searched the ship?” asked the captain.

“I did not; but I was not looking for passengers then. It seems to be an easy matter to answer my question, if you are disposed to do so,” added the revenue-officer.

“What’s the use of answering it?” said Capt. Crogick, utterly disgusted with the situation. “You will search my ship just the same.”

“As you refuse to answer me, I need waste no more time in talking about my duty.”

“Is it against the law of the United States to carry passengers?” demanded the captain.

“It depends upon who the passengers are.”

Mr. Graves called several of his men from the boat, and then went into the cabin. No passengers were in sight; and he began to try the doors of the state-rooms. He found that most of them were empty; but two were locked.

“My wife is in that one; and, if you wish to disturb her, I have no power to prevent you from doing so,” said Capt. Crogick, in the tones of injured innocence.

“I will not disturb her; but I don’t remember to have seen your wife when I was on board before,” replied the officer; “and you will recall the fact that I looked into all the state-rooms.”

“That you didn’t see her, don’t prove that she was not on board,” added Capt. Crogick doggedly.

“It don’t prove it; but I should be willing to bet a hat she was not on board when I visited your ship last time,” said the officer, with a laugh. “But I am not looking for your wife; and I shall not molest her in any way. The next room is locked; and my orders are to bring any passengers except your wife on board of the cutter. I must know who is in that room.”

“Well, sir, my wife’s sister is in that room,” added the captain.

“And who else?”

“No one else,” answered the captain, as he knocked on the door.

It was opened by Mrs. Wallgood. She stepped out into the cabin, looking as disdainfully at the officer as though she had been a tragedy queen.

“I beg your pardon, madam,” said Mr. Graves. “I am sorry to disturb you, but the captain of the cutter desires your presence on board of the vessel.”

“If the captain of the cutter wishes to see me, he must come where I am,” replied Mrs. Wallgood, as proudly as though she had been in her own house.

“I beg to remind you that he is an officer of the United States,” added Mr. Graves.

“I don’t care what he is. If I am to go on board of the cutter, I shall be taken there by force,” said the lady, with a queenly toss of the head.

“Very well, madam; for the present, I will let the matter rest,” added Mr. Graves, touching his cap to the lady, and retiring from the cabin, though not till he had examined the interior of the state-room.

“You will bear witness that I do not oppose you in the discharge of your duty,” said Capt. Crogick, following him to the deck.

“Of course you do not: I find no fault with you,” replied Mr. Graves, who saw that the captain supposed he had given up the search.

The officer called all his men to the deck, and commenced a search for the husband of the lady. He returned to the cabin with four of them, and the

place was carefully examined. The officer was familiar with the business, and had been through the "Housatonic" once before. He started his men into the between-decks.

"I was not aware that officers of the United States were in the habit of molesting lady passengers," said Mrs. Wallgood, with a withering sneer.

"They often do it, madam," replied Mr. Graves. "I have met a lady with ten thousand dollars' worth of smuggled goods on her person. When ladies engage in questionable transactions, they can hardly be excepted from interference by the officers of the customs."

"Do you charge me with smuggling?" demanded the lady.

"Certainly not, madam: I charge you with nothing," answered the officer, with a pleasant smile. "I only invited you to go on board of the cutter."

"But I will not go."

"Very well, madam: I shall simply inform the captain that you decline his invitation. I dare say that will be the end of the whole matter. I am sure he will not be so ungallant as to use any compulsion."

"Here he is!" shouted the old quarter-master, who was conducting the search between decks.

A moment later the veteran appeared leading out the cashier. It seems that the defaulter had a slight cold in the head, and an unfortunate sneeze betrayed his presence to the cutter's men.

“I am glad to see you, sir,” said the officer. “I must trouble you to go on board of the cutter.”

“I think you have made some mistake, for I have no business with the cutter,” replied Mr. Wallgood: but he was trembling with emotion; and, in fact, he was altogether too nervous a man to rob a bank, and then manage his own escape.

“Are you a passenger in this ship, Mr. Wallgood?” asked the officer.

“I am a passenger; but my name is not Wallgood,” answered the cashier.

“Then I beg your pardon for calling you by a wrong name,” added Mr. Graves. “May I ask your name?”

“My name is John Simpson.”

“Excuse me, Mr. Simpson, for the mistake I made. But I shall be obliged to ask you to visit the cutter, and my boat is waiting for you,” continued the officer, in the blandest tones.

“But I am not Mr. Wallgood, and you have mistaken the person you want,” persisted the cashier.

“Not at all: my orders are to bring on board the cutter all the passengers except the captain’s wife,” replied Mr. Graves. “This lady declines to go, and I shall merely report her refusal to the captain.”

“But what is your business with me?” asked the defaulter.

“I have no business whatever with you. I only obey the orders of my captain; and I know nothing whatever in regard to the matter,” replied Mr.

Graves. "You will oblige me by going into the boat which is at the accommodation ladder."

The cashier objected, but the officer was inflexible. Mr. Simpson had no business on board of the cutter: he was ill, and it was an exposure for him to leave the ship.

"Why don't you tell him up and down that you won't go, as I did?" demanded Mrs. Wallgood.

"Well, I won't go, then!" exclaimed the cashier.

"That is candid and straightforward," replied the officer. "Here, Peterson, put this gentleman into the boat," he added, turning to the quarter-master.

Peterson seized him by the collar, and marched him out of the cabin. Mrs. Wallgood appealed to the captain to resist; but he was too prudent to meddle with a United States officer. In spite of the lady he was compelled to get into the boat, which pulled for the cutter.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A FULL CONFESSION.

“**B**OAT ahoy!” shouted Capt. Crogick, as the men began to pull for the cutter.

“On board the ship!” replied Mr. Graves.

“The lady has consented to go to the cutter,” added the captain.

“She is too late now: if I find the captain of the cutter desires her presence, I will return for her; but I have the impression that she will not be needed.”

“But she does not wish to be separated from her husband,” persisted Capt. Crogick.

“Bear my regrets to her; but, as she chose to remain, I prefer to indulge her for the present; and the captain of the cutter shall decide whether he desires her presence,” answered the officer, as the boat passed out of hearing distance.

“I was not aware that the lady was Mrs. Simpson,” said Mr. Graves to his prisoner.

“This is an outrage; and I think I have friends enough at Washington to see justice done to me,” said the cashier, who found it necessary to say something to keep his courage up, and to preserve appearances.

“I certainly hope you will have justice done to you; but I am afraid it is the very thing you do not want,” answered the officer.

“I thought you said you knew nothing whatever about the matter; and yet you treat me as though I were a fugitive from justice,” replied Mr. Simpson.

“I do not know with what you are charged, or even that you are charged with any thing: I only know that you concealed yourself in the ship, and it cost half an hour to find you. I have generally noticed that people who have done nothing wrong do not hide from any one; and, on the other hand, I have observed that those who are guilty are the ones who hide. That is really all I know about it.”

The defaulter said nothing more; but he did a deal of heavy thinking while the boat was going to the cutter. He could not imagine how his secret had come into the possession of the captain of the cutter. He had taken pains to cover all his tracks: he had bribed every man in the yacht, and he was confident that none of them had betrayed him. It was possible that the cutter had witnessed his removal to the ship; and he could explain his misfortune in no other way. But he had not many minutes to think, for the boat was soon alongside the cutter.

Mr. Simpson was conducted to the deck of the steamer, where Capt. Singleton stood waiting for him. Neither Wade nor Lon was on deck, for the captain had required them to stay in the cabin till he had seen the defaulter.

“How many passengers did you find in the ship, Mr. Graves?” asked the captain.

“Only this gentleman and his wife, besides the captain’s wife. This is Mr. John Simpson. His wife declined to come, unless I brought her by force, which I did not care to do without further orders,” answered Mr. Graves. “After I had started to return, the lady changed her mind, and wished to come with her husband.”

“I do not desire her presence. I directed you to bring all the passengers, so that I might be sure to get the right one,” added the captain, as he turned to his prisoner. “Take a seat, Mr. Simpson;” and he placed a camp-stool for him.

“What is your business with me, captain?” demanded Mr. Simpson, mustering up all the courage he could assume.

“I am somewhat curious to know who and what you are; and you will oblige me by satisfying my curiosity,” said the captain, in the gentlest of tones.

“Your officer has given you my name. The captain of that ship is my brother-in-law; and I was going with him on a voyage for the benefit of my health. If there is any thing wrong about that, I should like to know what it is,” said Mr. Simpson.

“Perfectly right and laudable: the sea often has a good effect upon invalids; but it seems to me that the way you went on board of the ship was not quite regular.”

The cashier gave the explanation which had been agreed upon before.

“Where do you reside when you are at home, Mr. Simpson?”

“In Albany; and I am engaged in the grocery business. I am forty-one years old. I have a wife, but no children. I have been out of health for the last six months, and” —

“Do you know any thing about banking?” interposed the captain.

“As much as most business men who have dealings with banks.”

“Well, Mr. Wallgood, — I beg your pardon: Mr. Simpson, — but I have an idea that you know more of banking than the ordinary man of business.”

“Why do you call me Mr. Wallgood, when you know that my name is Simpson?” asked the cashier, who wanted to know with what he was charged; for it did not seem possible to him that the knowledge of his defalcation could have come out so far at sea.

“I have in mind a gentleman of that name, — the cashier of the Walnut National Bank, — who has just left Midhampton with a hundred thousand dollars belonging to the bank. He was a man about your size. Do you know any thing about him, Mr. Simpson?”

“I don’t know any thing about him,” replied the defaulter, with his heart in his throat.

“You must excuse me, Mr. Simpson; but I have a suspicion that this cashier was brought off from New

York in the yacht 'Moonlight,' and put on board of the ship 'Housatonic.' Have you seen any thing of him?"

"There is no such person on board of the ship," replied Mr. Simpson, struggling to appear unmoved under this trying ordeal.

"Just now he is not in the ship; but wasn't he in the cabin when you were?" asked the captain quietly, and as though he had not the least interest in the question.

"No, sir. No such person is or has been on board of the ship," protested the cashier.

"You will excuse me if I press this matter far enough to satisfy myself that you are not the person for whom I am in search."

"Do you for a moment suppose that I am the one who robbed the bank?" demanded Mr. Simpson, with all the indignation he could throw into his tones.

"You mistake this matter: I said distinctly that I wish to prove that you are not this person."

"That shows that I am under suspicion."

"It has that look, Mr. Simpson; but I am willing to take either way you like, and will prove that you are, or that you are not, the person, as you may elect."

"It is all the same thing," groaned the defaulter.

"Very well: then I will try to show that you are not the person. I have some witnesses to examine; and, as I intend to be as fair as I can, you may ask

them any questions you please," added the captain, as he beckoned to a steward, who was waiting near him.

"Witnesses!" exclaimed the cashier, who did not believe that anybody who knew him could be on board of the cutter.

"Call the first stowaway," added the captain to the steward. "If I find that you are not Mr. Wallgood, you shall return to the ship; and I will tow her far enough to make up for the delay to which I have subjected her."

Wade Brooks came on deck clothed in the suit of clothes provided for him when he came on board. The cashier did not recognize him; for he had seen him only in the gloom of the cabin. He wondered what that boy could know about him.

"Do you know this gentleman, Wade Brooks?" asked the captain, as soon as the boy came to him.

"I do, sir. It is Mr. Wallgood, the cashier of the Walnut National Bank," replied Wade.

"How do you know it is, my lad?"

"Because I often saw him in Midhampton; and I saw him night before last on board of the 'Moonlight;' and I heard him own that he had taken a hundred thousand dollars from the bank," replied Wade.

"I never saw the boy before in my life," protested the cashier.

"Yes, you have, sir; and you gave me a hundred dollars to keep still. And I told you I would keep

still if I was allowed to keep the money ; but Capt. Bendig took it from me," added Wade.

It was all plain enough to the cashier now. This boy had told the people of the cutter all about the doings on board of the yacht ; and it appeared that he had listened to the conversation between himself and his wife. It was no use to hold out any longer.

"Do you wish to ask this boy any questions, Mr. Simpson?" said Capt. Singleton.

"No, none," replied the cashier despondingly.

"Bring the other," added the captain to the steward ; and a moment later came Lon Trustleton.

"Why, how do you do, Mr. Wallgood?" exclaimed the president's son. "I'm sure I didn't think of seeing you here."

"What do you mean by calling that gentleman Mr. Wallgood?" asked the captain of the cutter. "His name is Simpson."

"This gentleman ! He is the cashier of my father's bank ; and I think I ought to know his name, for I see him almost every day in the week," replied Lon.

"I will give it up, captain," groaned the defaulter, covering his face with both his hands. "Do with me as you please."

"Why, what's the matter, Mr. Wallgood?" asked Lon, astonished at the conduct of the cashier. "If you are in trouble, my father will help you out of it."

"I don't believe he will this time," said the cash-

ier, unable to control his emotion. "I have robbed the bank of one hundred thousand! I may as well speak it out; for there is no longer any hope for me. I wish I was at the bottom of the sea!"

Suddenly he made a rush for the side of the vessel. But the captain saw what he intended to do; and two strong men seized him before he could leap overboard, and end his wretched life in the watery grave of a suicide.

"If you are going to do any thing of that sort, I shall put you in irons," said the captain, as the sailors led him back to his seat. "One thing more. What have you done with the money you took from the bank?"

"It is on board of the ship," replied the defaulter with a shudder.

"Possibly, if you restore it, they may not prosecute you; for that is the fashion of the times."

Mr. Wallgood consented to do this; but, before a boat could be sent to the "Housatonic," Capt. Crogick and the cashier's wife came to the cutter. They were astounded to hear of the wretched man's confession; for they had anticipated nothing so bad as this.

CHAPTER XXXII.

EVEN-HANDED JUSTICE.

THE captain of the cutter sent an officer, in charge of Mr. Wallgood, to the ship, for the effects of the latter, including the money and credits he had. In half an hour they returned. Capt. Crogick went back to the "Housatonic," and proceeded on his voyage, his wife remaining with him. Mrs. Wallgood laid aside her queenly air, and wept with her husband at the crushing blow which had overtaken them. Wade really pitied them, they felt so bad; but it showed him that the way of the transgressor was hard.

"What are you going to do with me?" asked Lon Trustleton, after the cutter had started for the "Moonlight."

"I suppose I can't do better than to send you back to your father; for I understand that you are a runaway, as well as the cashier of the bank," replied the captain.

"Wade Brooks told you that; and he is the greatest liar in the whole world," replied Lon, casting an ugly look at the subject of his remark. "He has been lying about me all along."

“I find he has told me the truth in all things. I think your father will feel very grateful to him; for he has been the means of arresting the cashier, and of recovering the money,” added the captain. “He says the boy with you stole two hundred dollars from his father, divided it with you, and then you ran away together.”

“He stole it himself,” said Lon at a venture.

“I do not intend to try the case between you,” added the captain. “I am willing to leave it with your father to settle as he thinks best.”

The cutter continued to go at full speed till she was within a short distance of the “Moonlight.” Every thing about the yacht was as it had been, for Mr. Wilkins was still in charge of her. As the water was perfectly smooth, the captain of the cutter decided to come alongside of the “Moonlight,” so that he could more conveniently finish the case. Fenders were put out, and the cutter was made fast to the yacht.

As soon as the two vessels were secured together, Capt. Bendig came on board of the cutter. He had been unable to obtain any satisfaction of Mr. Wilkins; and he judged what had been done, by the movements of the steamer. He had seen her overhaul the ship, but the two vessels were too far off for him to observe what had taken place. The first person he saw when he went over the side of the cutter was the cashier, sitting with his wife on the quarter-deck. The sad face of the defaulter was

enough to convince him that the worst had transpired.

"How's this?" he asked, walking up to the cashier.

"It is all over: your treachery has ruined me," replied Mr. Wallgood bitterly.

"What do you mean by that?" demanded the skipper of the yacht.

"You took the money I paid that boy, away from him; and he told the captain of this cutter the whole story."

"What, that wharf-rat?" exclaimed the captain. "I will take it out of his hide if he did."

"That will do no good. It is too late to do any thing now," groaned the cashier. "The mischief is done."

"See here, you young whelp, did you tell the captain of this cutter who was on board of the 'Moonlight'?" said Capt. Bendig, rushing fiercely at Wade, who was standing near the rail.

"I did: I told him all I knew about the matter," replied Wade frankly.

"You did!" and the captain seized him by the collar, and was about to chastise him on the spot, when the captain of the cutter ordered his men to lay hands on the assailant.

The sailors were not very gentle about it, and the skipper was tumbled all in a heap into the scuppers.

"If you attempt any thing of that kind again, I will arrest you, and put you in irons," said the captain of the cutter sternly. "You will find you have

enough to do take care of yourself, without meddling with others."

"I shall get even with that young thief somehow, or my name is not Bendig," added the skipper, as he picked himself up. "This world isn't big enough for both of us till I have given him what he deserves."

"What fault have you to find with him?"

"He broke into the yacht, and then got possession of business secrets, which he has used to my disadvantage; and I will take it out of his hide."

"If you do, I shall know where to look for you," replied Capt. Singleton. "Perhaps this business is a little outside of the strict line of my duty; but the robbing of a national bank is a matter for United States officers to deal with, and I shall take the responsibility. As for you, Capt. Bendig, you are guilty of a grave offence. You have used the yacht of your owner in assisting a bank defaulter to escape with his plunder. I don't think you can settle that with your owner alone."

"I think I can," replied the skipper.

"Mr. Wallgood, how much were you to pay this man for his services?" asked the captain of the cutter, turning to the cashier.

"That was a private bargain, and it's none of your business," interposed Bendig.

"I shall tell the whole truth now, wherever it hits; and I don't think I am under any obligations to you for taking the money for your crew, and robbing

this boy so that he was tempted to betray me," added Mr. Wallgood.

"Your best way is to tell the whole truth," said the captain of the cutter. "This man took the money, knowing it to be stolen from a national bank; and I think it will appear that he is an accomplice after the fact."

"Me?" exclaimed Capt. Bendig, startled at this view of the case.

"I am no lawyer; but that is what it ought to be. — How much did you pay him, Mr. Wallgood?"

"I gave him five hundred dollars for himself, and one hundred dollars for each of the men on board of the yacht. I paid the boy the money myself; but Bendig took it from him, so that he has that also," replied the cashier.

"This money was a part of the plunder; and it must be paid to the bank again," continued Capt. Singleton. "Did you give the money to the men, captain?"

"I did," replied the skipper of the "Moonlight;" and he appeared to be very much embarrassed.

"Mr. Wilkins, call all hands on board of the yacht," said the captain of the cutter to the officer in charge of the "Moonlight."

The crew of the yacht were mustered in the waist, and the revenue-officers proceeded to question them separately. Every one of them declared that he had received but fifty dollars, and not one of them knew any thing about the affairs of the cashier. They had

been told that the owners of the ship might object if they knew that she took passengers.

“How much money did you pay this man?” asked the captain of the cutter, returning to the deck of his vessel, where the cashier remained.

Mr. Wallgood stated the amount as he had before.

“Capt. Bendig, it seems that you have intended to cheat your own crew out of one-half of the sum they were to receive for their services,” continued the captain. “It is easy enough to believe this of you, after you have robbed this boy of all his share. I will give you about five minutes to restore to me all the money you have received from Mr. Wallgood.”

“All of it?” asked the bewildered skipper.

“Every cent of it.”

“But I paid out some money for provisions and stores,” pleaded the captain of the “Moonlight.”

“That shall be your loss; but the stolen money must be restored, without regard to whose pocket it comes out of.”

“What if I do not do it?”

“Then I will put you in irons, and hand you over to the first United States officer I can find in New York.”

Capt. Bendig concluded to restore all he had; and the cook, steward, and crew did the same. They could not help themselves: it was stolen money; and the captain of the cutter took the responsibility. Doubtless he exceeded the limit of his duty, as he

himself declared; but he had certainly done justice to all as far as it was in his power.

“Now, Capt. Bendig, you are released; and you may return to your vessel,” said the captain of the cutter. “If you are not satisfied with what I have done, you know where to look for me.”

“You are rough on me, captain.”

“Not so rough as you are on yourself. If you had not attempted to grasp more than your fair share of the plunder, and robbed that boy, you might have got out of it with more money in your pocket. You may go now.”

“You won’t mention this little matter to the owner of the ‘Moonlight,’ will you, captain?” whined Capt. Bendig. “I am a poor man; and, if I lose my place as the sailing-master of the yacht, I don’t know what I shall do. I have a family to support; and I don’t want to be out of a job.”

“I don’t know your owner; and I don’t make bargains of that sort with fellows like you. — Cast off the bow-line, Mr. Wilkins.”

Capt. Bendig returned to the yacht; and his view of the case was so changed, that it is doubtful whether he even wished to “take it out of the hide” of Wade Brooks.

“Where is the other boy?” asked the captain of the cutter; but no one had seen him.

“Where is Matt?” asked Wade. “The captain wants him.”

“He must be in the yacht: I have not seen him since I left her,” replied Lon.

Mr. Wilkins was sent to look him up. It was found that he was locked into Capt. Bendig's state-room. The skipper intended to make sure of him, if he could, so as to make some money by robbing him of what he had, and then making his father pay for restoring him. Matt was glad enough to get out of the "Moonlight;" for the captain had been rough on him during the absence of the cutter.

As soon as he was on board, the revenue-steamer started for New York. Lon and Matt had a conference as soon as they could get by themselves. They talked about the future; and they were not quite ready to be sent back home with a good part of the money they had taken still unspent in their pockets. They had not had the "good time" they anticipated; but they could not see how they were to escape from the cutter.

Some time in the night the cutter anchored off the Battery.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR.

WADE BROOKS was hardly satisfied with the situation. He was in great danger of being sent back to live with Obed Swikes. He had plenty to eat on the cutter, and he had fared pretty well on board of the "Moonlight." He could not endure the idea of returning to his former comfortless home, where he had been both starved and abused. He dreaded the cold of winter even more than the hunger of the summer, though it was both cold and hunger in the winter. He had tried to get work in New York without success; and he had not a cent of money to buy him a piece of bread.

It might be possible for him to escape from the cutter, or from those who attempted to take him back to Midhampton; but this was only jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire. The poor boy was sadly perplexed by the situation. It was cold and hunger if he went back to his former home, and it was starvation if he did not go there.

Lon and Matt were troubled in about the same way, though the food problem did not disturb them. They had money to buy what they wanted to eat;

but Wade had been rich twice, and had three times lost all his money, for it was "just his luck." If Lon and Matt went back to their homes, they had to answer for burning the barn, and taking the money from the closet over the mantle-piece. If they staid in New York, the police would by this time be on the lookout for them. If they could get out of the cutter, and on board of a steamer bound to some place in the south, they might keep out of sight till their money was all gone; and then all they had to do was to go home and take the consequences.

But the consequences did not trouble them much as Lon reasoned, their parents would be so glad to see them back, that they would let them off easy. This time they could not charge Wade Brooks with stealing the two hundred dollars; for he was not in the town when the deed was done. Even Obed Swikes would be compelled to believe his son was the thief.

Mr. Wallgood occupied a state-room by himself in the cabin, the door of which was kept open all night, with a man to watch him, lest he should repeat the experiment of attempting to jump overboard. The three stowaways were berthed in the steerage. The strictest watch was kept in every part of the vessel, and there was no chance for them to get out of her.

When the cutter came to anchor in the night, Mr. Wilkins, the first lieutenant, had been sent on shore by the captain; but no one was informed in regard to the nature of his mission. At daylight he re-

turned, bringing with him the morning newspapers. He reported to the captain as soon as he came on board.

“The papers of this morning have a full account of the disappearance of the cashier of the Walnut National Bank of Midhampton,” said Mr. Wilkins, when the captain asked him into his state-room, where he was still in bed. “The account says that Capt. Trustleton was in New York at the time the absence of the cashier was discovered; but he was telegraphed for, and immediately returned. It appears that the amount of the defalcation is one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.”

“But the cashier has but one hundred thousand,” added the captain.

“I think the fifty thousand was the amount he had taken before he left, and which made his departure necessary.”

“Very likely. The boy Brooks told me he heard the cashier say he had loaned money to the captain of the ‘Housatonic,’ which belonged to the bank. Did you ascertain where Capt. Trustleton was?” asked the captain.

“Yes, sir: he is at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where he arrived in the midnight train. The papers say he traced the cashier and his wife and another woman to the night-train for New York, and followed them the next night, just a day behind. The police were at work on the case all day yesterday. I wrote a note to Capt. Trustleton, informing him that his

presence was desired on board of the cutter as early in the morning as possible; and I directed the night clerk to deliver it to him in person at six o'clock in the morning; and he will be here, I think, by seven."

"Is the father of the other boy with him?" inquired the captain.

"I think not: the register of the hotel indicates that Capt. Trustleton is the only guest from Midhampton," replied Mr. Wilkins.

"I thank you, Mr. Wilkins, for the thorough manner in which you have done your work; and I recommend you to turn in."

The first lieutenant accepted this advice, and all was still about the cabin of the cutter again. At six o'clock Wade Brooks had slept all he could, and turned out. When he went on deck, the watch was washing down the decks; but he saw no chance to go on shore. Several boats were fast to the swinging boom; but the officer of the deck stood where he could see all that was going on.

At seven he was asked to breakfast at the captain's table. Lon and Matt were there also; but the defaulter had not yet left his room, at the door of which the sentinel still stood. Wade ate a very hearty meal; for he felt that this one might be the last he would get that day, for he intended to take French leave as soon as he found a chance to do so. Before the meal was finished, Mr. Wallgood came out of his room, looking very pale and haggard, as though he

had not slept any during the night. Wade ended his breakfast, and went on deck.

When he came out of the cabin, he saw a boat approaching the cutter; and, as it came nearer, he recognized Capt. Trustleton in the stern-sheets. He was amazed to see him so early in the morning; and he concluded that his business related to the cashier, though he could not see how he should know he was on board of the cutter. The president of the bank did not know that the defaulter was on board; but Mr. Wilkins had intimated to him, that the captain of the cutter wished to see him in relation to the robbery of the bank.

Mr. Graves was in charge of the deck, and he had been instructed to admit Capt. Trustleton on board. As soon as he came on deck, the first person he identified was Wade Brooks.

“How came you here, Wade Brooks?” asked the visitor, who was as much astonished to see the boy as the boy was to see him.

“It would take some time for me to tell the story,” replied Wade; “and I guess the captain of the cutter wants to see you, sir.”

“Have you seen any thing of Alonzo, my boy?” inquired the president anxiously.

“Yes, sir: Lon and Matt Swikes are at breakfast in the cabin.”

“Then it seems that you went with my son.”

“No, sir: I did not. I haven’t had any thing to do with them. Lon and Matt hid in the ship ‘Housa-

tonic,' and were found on board. That was the ship Mr. Wallgood was in."

"Mr. Wallgood!" exclaimed Capt. Trustleton. "Have you seen him too?"

"Yes, sir; and he is in the cabin, eating his breakfast," replied Wade, who knew this would be good news to the president of the bank.

"Is it possible?"

"It's so, sir. Mr. Wallgood was going to the coast of Africa in the 'Housatonic;' but the cutter found him out, and brought him back, with all the money he had taken from the bank."

"Well, this is good news that I did not expect," added Capt. Trustleton.

"Here comes the captain of the cutter, and he will tell you all about it," added Wade.

The president of the bank introduced himself to Capt. Singleton. They sat down by themselves, and the latter told the whole story.

"Now, sir, I want to say in conclusion, that you owe the discovery of the defaulter to the Brooks boy," said the captain of the cutter; "and I have found that he told me the truth in all matters."

"I will make it all right with him," said the president. "Wade tells me that my son and another run-away boy are on board."

"Yes, sir; and your son charges Wade Brooks with the stealing of two hundred dollars."

"I know that the charge is false," replied Capt. Trustleton earnestly. "The Swikes boy stole the

money from his father ; and I have no doubt that my son divided it with him. The Brooks boy was not in Midhampton when the money was taken. Even the boy's father believes he is guilty now."

Presently Lon and Matt came on deck ; and of course they were surprised to see Capt. Trustleton there. The father treated his son very sternly, telling him that he had disgraced himself and his family. For the first time Lon felt sorry for what he had done.

"How much of the stolen money have you left?" asked Capt. Trustleton.

"Not much," answered Lon evasively.

"Don't answer me in that way, Alonzo!" said his father severely. "Tell me the truth at once."

"I have over ninety dollars, and Matt has about the same," replied Lon, alarmed at the unusual severity of his father.

"Give it to me." Lon obeyed, and gave his wallet to his stern parent.

"Give me yours, Matthew," added the captain, turning to Matt.

Matt was afraid to refuse, and gave up the old wallet he had taken, with the money it contained. Lon and Matt both protested that they had no more ; but Capt. Trustleton was not satisfied till he had searched them both.

"Now, if you attempt to run away again, I will hand you over to the police, and let you stand your chance of serving out a term in the penitentiary," added Capt. Trustleton.

The cashier was completely overwhelmed when he met the president of the bank face to face. He trembled like an aspen, though the captain was more gentle with him than he had been with his son. But he was determined that the defaulter should pay the penalty of his crime. He was handed over to the proper officers, and in due time was sent to Mid-hampton to be tried for his offence; and was sent to the State Prison for a term of years, in spite of all the influence that could be brought to bear in his favor.

Capt. Trustleton and the three boys landed, and went to the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE EMPLOYMENT OFFICE.

“**W**ADE BROOKS, the captain of the cutter told me you had a hard time on board of the yacht, and that her captain took away from you the hundred dollars which Mr. Wallgood had given you,” said Capt. Trustleton, when they were by themselves at the hotel.

“Capt. Bendig was pretty rough on me ; but then that’s just my luck,” said Wade, laughing.

“Since you left your home in Midhampton, I have inquired into your situation there ; and I must say that I do not blame you for leaving your place,” continued the captain. “I don’t know whether you intend to return, or not ; but here is a sum of money to make good your loss on board of the yacht.”

Capt. Trustleton put a roll of bills into the hand of the boy, and then left him before he had time even to thank him for the gift. He was going to say that he did not intend to go back to the home of Obed Swikes ; but he had no time to do so. There he stood in front of the empty chair in which the president of the bank had been seated, with the roll of bills in his hand. It was in the public reading-

room, where plenty of people were gathered; and he did not observe that some of them were looking at him.

“Well, this is *not* just my luck,” said he to himself. “But I will bet there is not a man in New York smart enough to get this away from me.”

Then he could not help asking himself why Capt. Trustleton had given him this money at this time. Why did he not wait till they got back to Midhampton? He would not let Matt and Lon go out of his sight for a single minute, though they had not a cent of money; but he had given him a pile of bills, and did not seem to care where he went. He did not quite understand it at first; but, after he had considered it for a while, he was confident that he got at the captain’s meaning.

The captain had told him that he should not blame him if he did not go back to live with Obed Swikes. He did not expect him to go back; and for this reason he had given him the money at the present time. Certainly Capt. Trustleton had been very kind to him. He had given him a dollar once before. It was plain enough what the captain meant. Then perhaps he did not wish him to go back to Midhampton, for he knew something about the burning of Garlick’s barn.

“That’s it! He wants me out of the way!” exclaimed Wade to himself. “With all these bills in my pocket, I shall not be hungry at present. He wants me to take myself out of the way, and I’ll do it.”

Wade held the roll of bills given to him tightly clinched in his fist, and his hand in his pocket. The bitter experience of a few days before had made him wise and prudent. He was afraid even to count the money while so many people were about, though he was very anxious to know how much he had. He judged by the size of the roll, that it must contain as much as twenty dollars; but if there were only ten he should be satisfied, for that would feed and lodge him till he could find a place to work.

He walked about the hotel for an hour longer, with the bills still in his hand. He did not see any thing more of Capt. Trustleton or the two boys. He wondered what had become of them. He concluded that they had gone to their room to talk over the events of the last two days. He wanted to renew his search for a place to work, but he did not like to go off without saying any thing to Capt. Trustleton. Finally he went to the office, and asked the clerk where the captain was.

“He has taken the train for home: he went about an hour ago,” replied the clerk to his question.

“All right,” replied Wade; and he was sure now that Capt. Trustleton did not want him to go back to Midhampton.

The wanderer wanted to count his money before he left the hotel: if he did not, he would not be able to tell whether he lost any or not. Besides, the amount would help him in making his calculations for the future. He looked about the hotel for a place

where he could do it without being seen. He looked into the reading-room, among other apartments; and, as it was about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, it was by this time quite deserted. Fixing himself in a corner, he took the bills from his pocket.

It was a pleasing task; for this time it was not stolen money, and there was no one to take it away from him, — no one that he knew of. The first note he looked at was a ten-dollar bill; so was the second, and the third. The figures were so big, that he had to stop to rest his imagination. Thirty dollars so far! He began to think of buying out some of the rich men he had heard of in New York.

Again another ten-dollar bill was turned up, and then another, and another: in fact, every bill of the pile was of this denomination, and there were ten of them. One hundred dollars! And then it came to his mind, that the captain had said that he should make good the loss he had sustained by the treachery of Capt. Bendig. Wade was almost beside himself at this extraordinary luck, as he called it; but after a while he cooled off. He was ten times as much elated this time as he was when he had the same sum before. The money seemed to be ever so much more real than before.

With his hand on the money all the time, he walked about the room, thinking what he should do next. He wanted a place. He did not think, because he had money, that he could live without work: he wanted to earn his own living, and put the money into a

savings bank where it would pay interest; and then he should have something to lean upon if he got out of occupation, or should be sick, so that he could not support himself.

While he was thinking of the matter, he happened to glance at one of the newspapers that lay on the table. He saw the word "Wants." He had seen the same thing in the Midhampton paper; and he knew that people advertised when they wanted help, as men and women did when they wanted places. He wondered that he had not thought of this before; for perhaps this paper contained a score of places which he might obtain.

He took the newspaper, and sat down in the corner of the room to study the column of "Wants." He found plenty of places that he thought he should like. "Wanted, a young man to drive an express wagon: good recommendations required." He could drive an express-wagon, for he had done it a great many times; but, unfortunately, he had no recommendations, good or bad. This was the difficulty which Caleb Klucker had pointed out to him. He looked at a great many other advertisements; but all of them required testimonials, as Caleb had called them.

He was beginning to take a very hopeless view of the situation, when his attention was attracted to an advertisement in another column: "Wanted, a young man with one hundred dollars, to act as cashier in a restaurant. Good security and good interest given for the money."

Wade realized at that moment that he was "a young man with one hundred dollars." He did not comprehend what the duties of a "cashier in a restaurant" were, though he concluded that the principal one must be to take the payment for meals. He had been to several such places in Bridgeport and in New York; and he had noticed that a man was employed to take the money. He had been to school enough to learn his arithmetic pretty well, and he thought he could make change as fast as any of the men he had seen doing it.

Wade fixed in his mind the street and number where applicants for this desirable situation were required to call; and then he started to find the place. He inquired of a porter at the door where the street was. It was a long walk to the place, and he feared that the situation might be taken up before he could apply for it. It was nearly two hours before he reached his destination. It was a small office up one flight of stairs, in an old wooden building. It was called "an employment office."

At the side of the door were placards, stating that all sorts of persons were wanted. "One hundred waiters" were wanted. "Twenty-five male cooks" were wanted. "One hundred young men were wanted to drive express-wagons." "Fifty men as porters were wanted." "Seventy-five young men were wanted as clerks in stores." "One hundred boys were wanted in all sorts of places."

Wade wondered he had not come upon any such

place before. He had been wandering all over the city in search of a place; and here was one where hundreds of young men and boys were wanted. It was just the place for him; for, among all these situations, he was sure he could find one that would exactly suit him, especially as he was not very particular what kind of work he did. He was willing to be a waiter in a saloon, an errand-boy, or a clerk: he was even willing to buckle right down to hard work.

With his hand on his money, he ascended the stairs, and found the sign, "Employment Office," on a door which he opened and entered. The room he went into was a small office, the walls of which were covered with "wants" like those he had seen at the street-door. Behind a short counter was a dapper-looking man with a hook-nose, who smiled sweetly upon the anticipated customer. He was dressed in plaid clothes, and had a great diamond in his shirt-bosom which was big enough to qualify him to be a hotel-clerk.

"Good-morning, sir: what can we do for you?" asked the man, who called himself an "employment-broker," and for short reduced the term to simple "broker."

"I want to get a place to go to work," replied Wade, as intent on business as the broker.

"One dollar, if you please," added the man of places, holding out his hand to receive the fee.

"What's that for?" asked the young man from

the country, rather taken aback by this early demand.

“For one dollar we register your name; and, as soon as we find a place that will suit you, we put you into it without any further charge,” replied the broker.

“I am willing to give you a dollar if you will get me the place,” added Wade, who did not think it was just the thing to take the pay before the work was done; but then, he was “one from the country.”

“We don’t do business in that way. We can’t keep an office open for those that want places for nothing: we have been fooled too many times for that,” said the man, with a knowing wink. “What sort of a place do you want?”

“Cashier in a restaurant,” replied Wade confidently. “The paper says, a young man with one hundred dollars.”

“Have you the money?”

“I have.”

“That’s another thing,” replied the broker.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BENEVOLENT BROKER.

“**M**UST I pay a dollar before I can find out what sort of a place this one is?” asked Wade, who concluded that he should not negotiate on this basis.

“By no means! certainly not! We do business on correct principles,” said the employment broker, with the blandest of smiles. “When we raise any money for a party, we charge him a commission; and that pays our fee.”

“What sort of a place is this cashier in a restaurant?” asked Wade, who wanted to know something more about it.

“It is one of the most desirable situations in New York City,” answered the polite broker. “The young man who gets that situation is sure to be taken in.”

“Taken in?” repeated Wade, who had his own meaning for this phrase. “What do you mean by that?”

“Taken into the business; that is, if he proves to be honest and reliable. He has to know nothing but how to make change. It is a very nice place; and the proprietor of it is in a great hurry to obtain a

young man who can fill the bill. He was in here not more than half an hour ago, and said he wanted some one to take right hold at dinner to-day."

"How much does the place pay?" asked Wade, greatly interested in this very desirable situation.

"He did not say how much he was willing to pay; but I suppose about ten dollars a week; and the party would have his meals free at the restaurant."

Wade thought this was simply magnificent. Ten dollars a week for sitting at a counter and making change during meal-hours! That was more than they paid their clerks in the stores in Midhampton. How Obed Swikes's eyes would stick out, if he should go down to his former home, and tell him that he was getting ten dollars a week besides his board in the great city of New York!

"The cashier would not sleep at the place, I suppose," added Wade.

"That will be just as you and the proprietor can agree. I believe he has some rooms that he lets to his steady boarders."

"And the one that gets this place must lend the man that keeps the restaurant a hundred dollars?" said Wade, who did not quite understand this part of the proposed bargain.

"Precisely so. You see, this cashier will handle hundreds of dollars every day of the proprietor's money; and this small loan is merely to insure the honesty of the person employed. He does this instead of asking for testimonials; for, between you and me, no

one knows who signs these papers, and I have heard that there are men who will give anybody a testimonial for a dollar or two," laughed the knowing broker in situations.

Wade saw the point, and thought it was a good idea ; for he had no recommendations, and all the other advertisements required them.

"I don't find any fault with the loan," said Wade, when he had looked into the subject.

"I think you said you had the money," added the man behind the counter.

"I did say so."

"Actually?" queried the broker.

"I shouldn't say so if I didn't have it," answered Wade, with some indignation.

"You will excuse me if I wish to assure myself on this point. You see, we are so often imposed upon, that we hardly know whom we can trust," continued the broker. "It was only yesterday that I had a young man apply for this place ; and, after giving the keeper of the restaurant a deal of trouble, it turned out that he had no money, and wanted to give his note for the hundred dollars ; and that would have been no guaranty at all for his honesty."

"I mean to speak the truth all the time," said Wade.

"I have no doubt you do ; but then, you are an entire stranger to me. I cannot send for the proprietor of the restaurant, and ask him to come up here under another uncertainty. If you will just

satisfy me that you have the money, I will send for him at once. You see, it is not very often that a young man of your age has a hundred dollars in his pocket," persisted the broker in his blandest tone.

"I think I can easily satisfy you on that point," said Wade, as he took from his pocket his wallet, exhibiting the roll of bills, and turning over each one so that the man behind the counter could count them as he did so.

"That's enough," answered the broker, his eyes glowing with satisfaction. "I see that you are an honest and fair young man, and very different from most of those who come here. I have a great deal of sympathy for young men out of employment; but I am sorry to say that a great many of them are willing to cheat me out of my time and money."

"I am not such a fellow!" exclaimed Wade.

"I know you are not. I see you speak the truth, and are ready to back up what you say," added the benevolent broker. "Now, if you will sit down here for a few minutes, I will go down stairs, and find a boy to send after the keeper of the restaurant."

"I won't give you all that trouble," interposed Wade. "I will go to his restaurant, and see him there, if you will tell me where it is."

"That's no way to do business," said the broker, shaking his head with another knowing smile. "I am sorry to say that all these restaurant-keepers are not as honest as you are, Mr. — What did you say your name was?"

“I didn’t say; but my name is Wade Brooks,” replied the applicant.

“Some of them are not as honest as they might be, Mr. Brooks,” continued the broker, who seemed to have his eyes open to dishonesty in every direction.

“If he is not an honest man, I don’t know as I want to have any thing to do with him,” added Wade doubtfully.

“Oh! he is a perfectly honest and upright man, as the world goes,” interposed the broker, seeing that he had rather overdone the business. “You see, if I get him the right sort of a cashier, he is to pay me a commission for my services. If you go to his place of business, and engage with him, he may say — though I don’t think he would — that I was not entitled to the commission, as the arrangements were not made in my office. A great many very honest men, even members of the church, take this view of the matter. But the advertisement you saw, and which brought you here, cost me three dollars; and my commission only amounts to five dollars.”

Wade Brooks had brains enough to comprehend this logic; and he thought the broker was very fair about the matter. He did not see how anybody could hire an office, pay for advertisements, and do business, for nothing.

“I will send for Mr. Flinker” —

“Mr. who?” interrupted Wade.

“Mr. Flinker. Didn’t you ever hear of Flinker’s restaurant?”

“Never,” replied Wade.

“I supposed everybody knew it,” added the broker, as though he pitied the young man for his ignorance. “It is just in the midst of his dinner-time, and I don’t know that he will be able to come up just at present.”

“If you will tell me where it is, I will go there and get my dinner: I would like to see what sort of a place it is.”

“That isn’t the right way to do business,” replied the broker, writing a note with a pencil in a very hurried manner. “I think this note will bring him at once; and I dare say he will want you to go to work right off.”

Wade happened to think, if he broke one of the ten-dollar bills in his pocket, he would not have a hundred dollars to make the trade with; and he concluded to let the broker send for the keeper of the restaurant, who would at least give him his dinner, if he did not set him at work at once. There was something very pleasing in the idea of beginning his new duties at once. His hundred dollars would be put on interest also. The broker left the office, and went down stairs; but he was not absent more than five minutes.

“I think he will be here in a few minutes,” said the man of places. “I believe he has his father in the restaurant for a few days; and if he has, he will be able to come right off.”

It was not more than twenty minutes, before a man

came into the office; and the broker introduced him as Mr. Flinker, speaking in the highest terms of Wade, as though he had known him all his life. He was sure the young man was honest and smart, and that he was just the person to be the cashier of a restaurant. Mr. Flinker was very glad to see him. He had had a great deal of trouble with the cashiers of his restaurant. They were dishonest, and robbed him of half of his profits. He would never employ another without some sort of guaranty of his honesty; and the "dead beats" who had so often imposed upon him were the very ones who never had a hundred dollars to deposit with the employer, to insure their good behavior.

"I will pay you ten per cent for the money," continued Mr. Flinker. "It is true, I do not need the money, and would rather not take it if I could manage the business in any other way."

"I am a poor boy, and this hundred dollars is all the money I have in the world," said Wade, who was pleased with the fair talk of the keeper of the restaurant. "I can't afford to lose it."

"Do you think I would rob you of it?" demanded Mr. Flinker, looking as magnificent as though he had been the president of the Walnut National Bank.

"Oh, no, sir! I didn't mean that," protested Wade, afraid that he had offended the high-toned keeper of the restaurant.

"If you did, I would have nothing more to say to you about this little matter; for I can't afford to have my honor doubted."

“Excuse me, for I didn’t mean what I said,” added Wade.

“I see you didn’t; and I pass over the remark,” said the indulgent Mr. Flinker.

“But the advertisement said good security would be given for the money,” persisted Wade, who was not quite willing to drop the subject.

“Very true; and the note of Francis Flinker is as good as gold; but you shall have an indorser.”

Wade understood what this meant; and the keeper of the employment bureau offered to put his name on the back of the note.

“You can satisfy yourself about the name of Mr. Flinker, by asking all the people near his place. He will pay the note any time when you want the money,” said the man behind the counter. “Then, if he don’t pay it, I will.”

Wade reflected.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE NEW CASHIER.

OBED SWIKES sometimes had money to lend, and Wade had heard him talk with the neighbors about such matters; and he had listened to many conversations on such subjects at the stores and in other places. If a man was able to pay, his note was good. He could easily find out what people thought of Mr. Flinker near his place. If they all said he was good, he could safely trust him with his hundred dollars.

“We might as well draw up the note, and sign it here; for the restaurant will be full,” suggested Mr. Flinker.

The broker wrote it, and Mr. Flinker signed it. Then the man behind the counter indorsed it, and handed the paper to Wade. He read it, and saw that it was in the usual form. He had learned about notes at school, and had seen them in the books; and he was sure the note was all right.

“You can inquire about me in the vicinity of the restaurant; and, if you find it is all right, I will give you the note, and take the money. Now we will go

to my place of business," said Mr. Flinker, when the arrangements were all made.

Wade was all ready; and he walked beside the proprietor of Flinker's restaurant to that establishment. He was conducted through a great many streets, and turned so many corners, that he did not believe he could ever find the employment office again, if he wished to do so. But he felt that he had no further business with that bureau. He was almost sure of his place, and even expected to be taking the money for the customers' dinners in the course of another half-hour.

At length they came to the establishment. It was rather a large place. Over the door was a sign with large letters, "Flinker's Restaurant." Bills of fare were stuck up all over the front of the store, and a great many people were going in and out. It looked like a place that was doing a very lively business.

"This is my establishment," said Mr. Flinker, when they came to the door.

"It looks like a big place," said Wade, delighted to think he was to be the cashier of such an establishment.

"It's not very big," said the proprietor modestly. "I intend to enlarge it in the fall, for I own the building."

He owned the building! Then what was the use of asking anybody whether his note was good or not? But Wade determined to make sure on this point; for he had lost money, and he was not going to run the slightest risk this time.

“We will go in, and I will give you some dinner then you can go about the neighborhood, and ask about my credit among the shop-keepers.”

“I am all ready for my dinner,” added Wade.

Mr. Flinker led the way into the restaurant, and took a seat at a vacant table. He invited Wade to be seated with him, and then tossed the bill of fare to him.

“Order what you like best,” said he, in an indifferent sort of a way.

Wade called for roast chicken and several other articles, though he was not as hungry as he had sometimes been.

“Call for every thing you wish,” added Mr. Flinker, in an off-hand way; and it was evident that he was a liberal man towards his help.

The proprietor called a waiter, and gave him the order for the dinners in a haughty tone; and the man in a white apron was certainly very polite to him. He seemed to be perfectly at home; for, while they were waiting for the dinner, he got up and walked about the room, speaking to various persons, though the cashier that was to be could not hear any thing he said. Then he left the restaurant by a door in the rear, which Wade thought might lead to the kitchen. Certainly Mr. Flinker acted as though he was the master of the place, if the “one from the country” had for an instant suspected that he was not.

Wade looked at the counter, at which quite a

number of people were seated on high stools, eating oysters variously cooked. At one end stood an old man who was taking the money for the meals. He seemed to be very smart for an old man; and Wade concluded that he was the father of the proprietor.

The waiter brought the two dinners ordered; and in another minute Mr. Flinker joined him at the table. Neither of them said much till the eatables were disposed of; for Wade was too much interested in his present occupation to care much for any thing else; but he saw what was going on all the time. He thought his new situation would be all that he desired. Then he and his future employer had pudding and coffee; and Wade was forced to admit that it was the best dinner he had eaten for a long time, if not the best he had ever had. The waiter brought two checks when the meal was finished.

Wade didn't see why the man should bring the proprietor these checks, as of course he did not have to pay for what he had ordered. Perhaps Mr. Flinker saw that he looked with some surprise upon these bits of pasteboard; for he at once explained them.

"You will take notice of this little circumstance, Mr. Brooks," said he. "I require a check to be given to every one that eats at these tables."

"What's that for?" asked Wade.

"If I didn't do it, all the waiters might dine their friends here. The old gentleman at the counter don't know that you are with me. Every one that dines here free carries his check to the cashier; and

he is instructed to pass it without any money. It is a part of the cashier's duty to see that every one brings a check to him. If the person is not to pay, he is the only one that knows any thing about it."

"Your father seems to be a very smart man, in spite of his age," suggested Wade.

"He thinks he is smart; and so he is, in a certain way; but he makes a great many mistakes. Besides, he knows too much for me. I have to support him; but he orders me around as though I were still a child," laughed the proprietor of the restaurant. "He is my father; and of course I have to humor him."

"He has forgotten that you have grown up, I suppose," added Wade.

"Very likely. Now you can go out and ask about my credit; and, if you are not gone more than half an hour, I shall be here when you come back. You are rather too late for dinner to-day; but you will be on hand for supper, for my father only stays during the middle of the day."

"I will not be gone more than fifteen minutes," replied Wade, who felt that the inquiry was nothing but a mere form.

"Very well: I will be here. I have to go into the kitchen, and lay out the meats for supper," added Mr. Flinker.

Wade left the restaurant with the feeling that his fortune was made. He was to have ten dollars a week; for that was what the proprietor had promised

him in the course of the conversation at the employment-office. It was the nicest and easiest sort of work he could think of, and was not at all like the drudgery he had been obliged to do on the farm of Obed Swikes. He had been unlucky a great many times; but now he was the luckiest fellow in the world.

At the corner of the next street, he saw a large provision-store. It was not unlikely that Mr. Flinker bought his meat at this place. He went in. Business was dull at this time in the day. He had read the sign over the door; and he asked for Mr. Wangdon.

"That's my name," replied the elderly man to whom he had put the question. "What can I do for you?"

"Do you know Mr. Flinker?"

"I do: he has been my neighbor for ten years."

"Is his credit good?"

"Flinker's? He pays cash for every thing, and don't owe a dollar in the world," replied Mr. Wangdon with enthusiasm.

"Would you take his note for a thousand dollars?" asked Wade, putting the question as he had heard it done at home.

"Yes, for ten or twenty thousand dollars, or any other sum that I could lend him, or sell goods for. He is better than half the banks. Why do you ask such a question?"

"A gentleman asked me to make some inquiries about Mr. Flinker."

“He is worth more than a hundred thousand dollars, and has no debts. Every business-man about here will tell you the same thing,” replied Mr. Wangdon. “And he is one of the best and kindest men in the world.”

Wade thought so too, though he was glad to have his own opinion of the keeper of the restaurant confirmed.

“I am much obliged to you for telling me all this,” added Wade, as he left the provision-store.

It would have been better for the boy from the country if he had told Mr. Wangdon more fully why he asked these questions; but he was satisfied. It was useless to ask anybody else about Mr. Flinker for the marketman had told him what all the business-people thought of the proprietor of the restaurant. He went back; and he had not been absent more than a quarter of an hour. As he entered the place, he saw Mr. Flinker talking to his father at the counter; but, as soon as he came in, the conversation was terminated, and the son took the new cashier into a retired part of the room.

“I am all ready for business,” said Wade, with a cheerful smile upon his face.

“Then you are satisfied with the inquiries you have made?” added Mr. Flinker.

“Perfectly satisfied,” answered Wade, taking his wallet out.

“If you are not, I am entirely willing to give you more time to look the matter up; for I want you to feel secure.”

“I don’t want any thing more. The man that keeps on the corner says you are worth a hundred thousand dollars, and that you don’t owe a dollar in the world,” added Wade, thinking that this report would please his new employer.

“That’s all true enough ; and this note will be the only piece of paper of the kind with my name upon it in New York, or anywhere else,” replied Mr. Flinker, as he tossed the note to Wade.

The “one from the country ” read the paper again, and then handed his hundred dollars to the proprietor of the restaurant, who was worth a hundred thousand dollars, and did not owe a dollar.

“By the way, can you find 786 Broadway? I want some one to go up there, and collect a bill,” added Mr. Flinker.

Wade was sure he could find it, and started with the bill.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

JUST HIS LUCK AGAIN!

MR. FLINKER told the new cashier that if he returned by five o'clock, he would be in season for the supper. The bargain was completed, and he was the cashier of the great restaurant. If he was minus his hundred dollars, it was in better hands than his own. In fact, he was glad to get rid of the money, for he was no longer nervous about its safety. There were so many sharpers about the great city, that he was glad to hold the note of such a man as Mr. Flinker for it. None of those swindlers like Caleb Klucker could rob him of it now.

With a light heart Wade walked up Broadway, thinking all the time about the new situation. He had a lively imagination, and he could not help fancying himself behind that counter in the restaurant, taking in the checks for meals, and dealing out the change for bills, as he had seen old Mr. Flinker do it. It was a "soft thing" for a boy who had worked as hard as he had for the last year.

Still thinking about it, he arrived at the number in Broadway contained in his directions. He took out the bill. It was against one Charles Wadley, for

a dinner for six persons at the restaurant. The amount was four dollars. He found the number given him, but he could find no sign with Mr. Wadley's name upon it. The building that was numbered 786 had a large store on the street. He went into it, but no one knew any thing about Mr. Wadley. Then he went up stairs, calling at every room to the top of the house. No one ever heard of such a person as Charles Wadley; and the janitor was sure there was no such man in the building.

Wade was determined to do his work in the most thorough manner, and he went into all the neighboring stores and offices. At last he was compelled to give it up, and returned to the restaurant; and it was about five o'clock when he arrived. He went in as though he belonged there, and looked about for Mr. Flinker. He did not see him, and one of the waiters followed him up to serve him with whatever he might desire for his supper.

"Will you take a seat here?" said the man, pulling out a chair for him.

"No: I don't want my supper now," replied Wade. "Can you tell me where Mr. Flinker is?"

"That's Mr. Flinker behind the counter," answered the waiter.

"I know; but the younger Mr. Flinker," said Wade, who was surprised to see the old gentleman; for the proprietor had told him his father was there only in the middle of the day.

"I don't know any thing about any young Mr.

Flinker; but I dare say the old gentleman can tell you."

Wade did not like to talk to the old gentleman, for he had the feeling that he would think he was stepping into his place, so he sat down and waited, hoping the owner of the establishment would soon appear. He waited for an hour, seated near one of the front windows of the room. Mr. Flinker the proprietor did not come; and, what was almost as bad, the old gentleman did not go.

At last he attracted the attention of the old gentleman, who called a waiter, and asked him what that boy wanted. It happened to be the same one that had spoken to Wade. The man told him that the boy wished to see the young Mr. Flinker.

"Whom do you want to find?" asked Mr. Flinker, senior.

"I was waiting for your son," replied Wade, walking up to the counter.

"For my son!" exclaimed the old gentleman, with a jolly laugh, as though he enjoyed a joke. "I think you will have to wait a tremendous long while for him."

"Why so, sir? won't he be in again to-day?" asked Wade, opening his eyes very wide.

"I don't believe he will."

"When will he be in?"

"Really, I can't say; but I don't expect him this year," chuckled the old man.

"You don't expect him this year!" exclaimed

Wade, who could not fathom the worthy old gentleman's meaning.

"No, young man; nor next year either. I may say I don't expect him at all."

A customer who seemed to be intimate with Mr. Flinker, senior, came up to the counter, and helped the old man do his laughing.

"I don't understand you, sir; and I can't see what you are laughing at," added Wade, very much perplexed and embarrassed.

"Well, young man, I don't understand you any better than you understand me," laughed the old man. "But what do you want of my son, in case you find him?"

"I have come to go to work here."

"Oh, you have! And what do you intend to do?"

"I agreed to come as cashier of this restaurant," answered Wade; and he was afraid the old man was trying to play some joke upon him.

"As cashier! Then you intend to take my place, for I have done that part of the work for the last forty years, and I feel able to do it a while longer. Did my son hire you for this place?"

"He did; and agreed to give me ten dollars a week, and my meals."

"Did he, indeed? Then he engaged to give you very good wages," laughed the old man; and so did his companion in mischief.

"I thought so myself; but, as your son offered me that price, I took him up at once," added Wade.

“Oh! I don't blame you at all for taking him up; and I hope he will pay you what he agreed.”

“He told me to go to work to-night, and take the money of the people who come in to supper,” persisted Wade.

“I guess not, young man: I take the money myself. I never trust any one to do that,” said the old man, chuckling again.

“Your son said you went home in the middle of the afternoon, and were here only in the middle of the day,” continued Wade, hoping to hit upon something that would move the old man.

“I think my son did not know me very well.”

“But he said he was the owner of this place, and that he only got you to come in and take the money till he could get a cashier that he could trust.”

“That was rather mean of my son, to cut me out of the ownership of my own property,” said the old man, laughing with his friend.

“He said he had to support you; but that he did not like to have you here, because you ordered him around just as if he was still a child,” said Wade, piling up the testimony as fast as he could.

“Well, now, if my son talks like that, I shall not like to have him here; and between you and me, young man, I'll bet I shall come out of it best.”

“I'll bet you will,” added the friend.

“He wanted an honest cashier.”

“And you are the honest cashier, are you?”

“I am; and gave security for my honesty.”

“I’m glad you did that; and I hope it will keep you honest as long as you live.”

“I wish you would tell me where I can see your son,” said Wade, in almost pleading tones.

“I have no son: I never had a son. My boys are all girls,” replied Mr. Flinker more seriously, when he saw the troubled expression on the boy’s face.

“You have no son!” exclaimed Wade; and for the moment the blood in his veins seemed to be icy cold.

It was terrible to think of; but he began to feel that he had been deceived once more. He had lost his money again: it was just his luck.

“Young man, I don’t understand your case at all,” said Mr. Flinker in a kinder tone. “I saw you here at dinner with a man; and he paid for the two meals. You went out, and came in again. You sat down in the corner together; and then you both went away. That is all I know about you or the man.”

“I saw the man talking to you when I came in,” added Wade.

“True: he did speak to me about the price of meals by the week; and that was what we were talking about when you came in.”

“He told me he was the owner of this place, and that you were his father. I answered his advertisement for a cashier who could furnish a hundred dollars.”

“And did you let him have the money?” asked the real proprietor of the restaurant, opening wide his eyes, as Wade had done before.

“I did, sir ; and it was all the money I had in the world,” replied Wade, with something like a groan of anguish.

Wade Brooks related the whole story, from the time Capt. Trustleton gave him the money to the present moment, producing the note, and the bill against Charles Wadley, as proof of the truth of the statement. By this time it was dark, and too late to do any thing about finding the swindlers. Mr. Flinker called in a policeman, and told him the story. He had heard of one other case of the same kind. The keeper of the restaurant and his friend wished Wade to come again in the morning, and they would make an attempt to find the keeper of the employment office ; for he must be a party to the fraud.

“Just my luck!” exclaimed Wade, as he went out into the street. “I didn’t think there was a man in New York smart enough to get that money away from me. Now I haven’t a cent to pay for a bed or for my supper.”

He wanted to sit down and cry about it ; but he knew that folks would ask him what the matter was if he did ; and so he kept walking, without having any place to go to. He wandered up to the vicinity of the City Hall, and occupied one of the seats in the park, till a policeman told him it was time for him to go home. He wished he had a home to go to ; but he was afraid of the officer, and he resumed his wanderings. He walked up and down Broadway till he heard the clocks striking twelve. He was very

tired and sleepy, and he wanted to find some place where he could lie down. He remembered going through a narrow street into which the back-doors of the Broadway stores opened, where he had seen a great many large boxes or cases. He could make his bed in one of these ; and it would be better than lying down in the street.

After a while he found the narrow street, and got into one of the boxes. He fell asleep there in a few minutes ; but a noise woke him after a while. He kept perfectly still, and listened. Then, in the gloom of the night, he saw two men bringing things out of the door next to him. It was a robbery. He wanted to do something. He heard a man groan inside of the store ; for the door was only a few feet from him. One man went back into the store. Wade sprang upon the other.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HOLDING THE FORTRESS.

IT was a bold act for a boy of Wade's years and strength. But he had every advantage, or he would not have dared to tackle a full-grown man. The boxes, in one of which he had made his bed, were piled up three tiers high; and to escape observation, he had made his bed in the upper one. The end of the pile was like a pair of stairs, as the boxes had been left for the convenience of the men who had put them in this shape.

Wade stood on the second tier, about six feet from the pavement. The robber in the street was stooping down, and appeared to be arranging the goods brought from the store in convenient shape for carrying them away. Taking this moment for the act, he jumped down, so that his cowhide shoes hit the man fairly on the head. He was evidently stunned by the blow; for he stretched out on the pavement, and did not move.

But Wade knew there was another, if not two more of them; and his plan had succeeded so well, that he determined to repeat the movement. He sprang back to the top of the second tier of boxes as

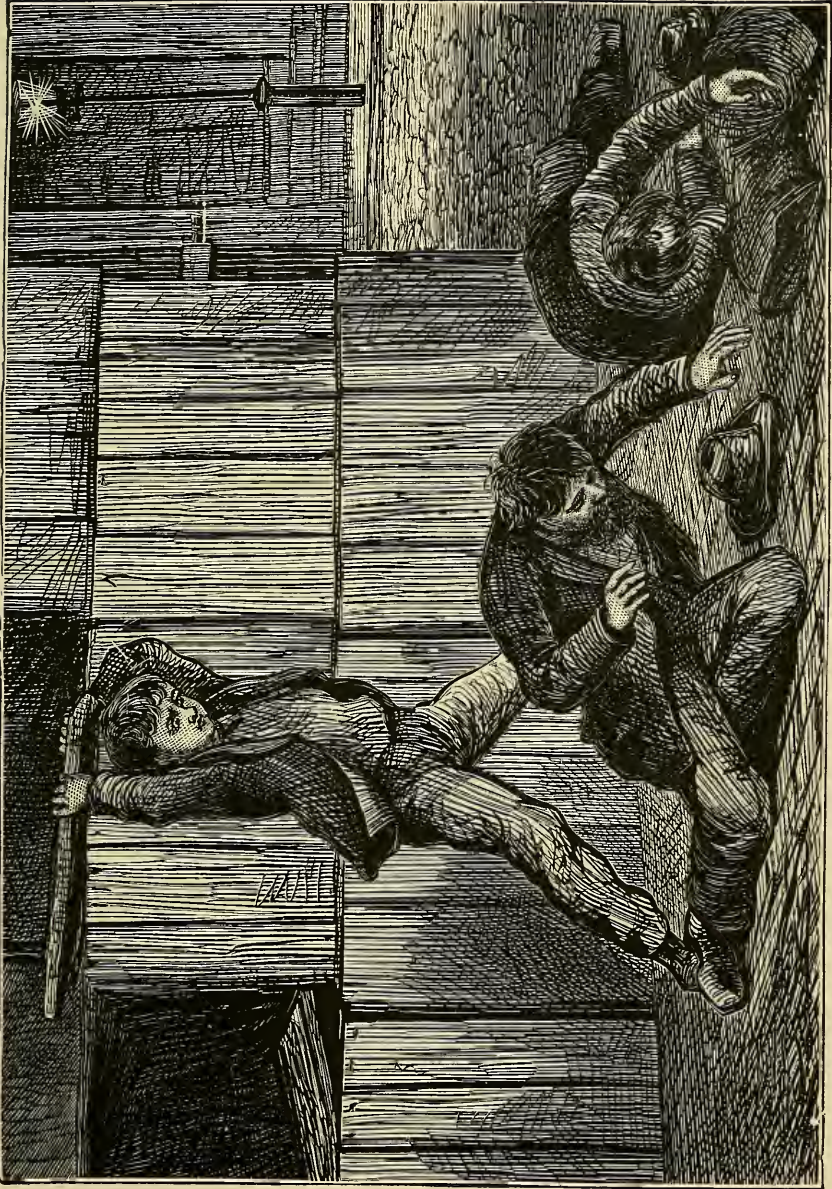
soon as he could gather himself up. As he rose he picked up a heavy piece of board which been part of the cover of one of the cases. When he had reached his perch, he heard rapid footsteps in the store. The burglar inside had heard the noise, though he must have been in the front part of the store, for it took him some time to reach the back street.

The instant he was out of the door, and before he could ascertain what was the matter with his companion, Wade leaped down upon him, intending that his feet should hit the man in the head. He did strike the robber in the head, but he was not stunned like the other; and Wade hit him a crushing blow with his club, which settled him for the moment.

The brave boy looked his victims over, and satisfied himself that both of them were either dead or stunned, for they did not move. The last one he had overthrown had a dark lantern in his belt, of which Wade relieved him, and then went into the store.

He had heard a groan, and he listened for it again. It was some time before it was repeated, but at length he heard it; and, following in the direction it led him, he found a man gagged and bound to a post. He was breathing very heavily as though he was struggling for breath.

Wade did not lose a moment in releasing the man, and taking the gag from his mouth. The victim was so exhausted that he could not speak, or he pretended to be so; and Wade did not wait for him to



WADE HIT HIM A CRUSHING BLOW WITH HIS CLUB. — Page 302.

do so. He gathered up the cords with which the man had been tied, and took a large coil of line that lay on the floor near the post, and returned to the insensible robbers in the street. With the cords he proceeded to tie their arms behind them.

Before he had completed the job, the man from the store joined him, having partially recovered from the hard usage he had had at the hands of the burglars. Wade was not content with binding their arms behind them; he tied their ankles together so that they could not run if they should suddenly recover the use of their senses. The man from the store assisted him at the work. While they were thus engaged, they heard the report of a pistol, and Wade was conscious of a whizzing noise near his head.

“There are more of them,” said the man, who seemed to be trembling with apprehension. “But I have a pistol.”

“Use it, then, if you see anybody,” replied Wade.

The man, who was a clerk in the store, looked up and down the street, and then fired his pistol twice.

“Very likely there are two more of them; and we had better get into the store, or we may be shot,” said the clerk.

“All right; but we will drag these fellows in with us,” replied Wade.

“We had better lose no time, for a bullet may make an end of us at any minute.”

“It won’t take us any longer if we make sure of

these men," added Wade, as he dragged the first one that had fallen into the store.

The clerk took hold of the other, but he seemed to lack the strength to move him; and Wade had to help him.

"Now shut the door," continued the active youth, suiting the action to the word. "Can you fasten it?"

"I suppose the rascals have spoiled the lock," replied the clerk.

But Wade found the key on the floor. The burglars appeared to have turned it with their nippers, and then pushed it out on the floor, using false keys to open the door. When he had turned the key, he saw to his astonishment that there were two great bolts on the door, besides the lock. These could not have been shoved back without help from the inside.

Wade had no time to consider this circumstance, though it was suggested to him; for it occurred to him just at that moment, that the goods taken from the store by the first man he had "sat down upon" were still in the street, and he had forgotten to take them in. He carefully opened the door, and, seeing that no one was near, he stepped out. He was just picking up the bundle when another pistol was discharged. He felt something in his arm, but it was so slight that he did not think it could be the bullet from the pistol. It did not disable him, and he made haste to drag the heavy bundle into the store. Then he locked and double-bolted the door. As he looked

over the fastenings, he did not believe that any robbers could get through that door.

By this time Wade was pretty well cooled off after the violent excitement of the affair. He examined the door very carefully by the aid of the lantern he had taken from the burglar's belt. Certainly there was no break in the door by which any one on the outside could have moved those two heavy bolts. Near the door was a box of carpenter's tools. It contained augers, chisels, a mallet, and some other implements.

While he was examining the door and its surroundings, he heard the robbers moving, and went to them to inquire into their condition. To his surprise he found that the cords of one of them were partly loosed. The clerk was near him, and no one else could have unfastened them. Wade made haste to secure him again; and he did it in a more thorough manner than before. Then he looked over the other one; but his bonds did not seem to have been tampered with. He saw a revolver sticking out of the pocket of the man, and he took possession of the toy.

"Why don't you use your pistol?" he heard the first one say; and he could have spoken to no one but the clerk, for the other robber was not in condition to use a pistol, or any other weapon.

The words were hardly spoken before the report of a pistol was heard in the store; but Wade was not hit. He raised his lantern instantly, and saw the clerk was aiming at him again. The pistol in Wade's

hand was all cocked, ready for use; but he had never fired a revolver in his life before. He pointed it at the clerk, and let drive. Probably the ball did not go within ten feet of the mark; but it terrified the timid clerk as much as though it had gone through his body.

“Don’t fire again!” exclaimed the clerk.

“Drop that pistol, then!” said Wade sharply. The treacherous clerk obeyed him instantly, and the pistol fell to the floor.

Wade walked over to him, and picked it up, putting it into his pocket.

“Then it seems that you are one of the robbers,” said Wade, throwing the light of the lantern into his face.

“No, I am not. I could not help it,” pleaded the fellow.

“Lie down on the floor!” said the defender of the store.

The clerk obeyed without an instant’s hesitation.

“Now, my man, if you attempt to do any thing, I will put one of the bullets in this pistol where it will do the most good,” continued the brave boy, who was astonished when he thought that he had looked a pistol full in the face; but then, he had lived faster and learned more during the last week than in all the rest of his life put together.

Gathering up a handful of the ropes which had been used to bind the burglars, he tied the clerk in the same manner as the robbers. He had not sus-

pected him of being a confederate till the villain fired at him at the suggestion of the fallen burglar. It was plain enough now, how the robbers had got in while those two huge bolts were on the door. Having secured the inside villains, Wade felt that he held the fortress securely; and he did not believe the accomplices on the outside could get it away from him.

He had noticed that most of the stores he passed in the night had one or more gas-burners lighted. This store was dark as midnight, except the faint light he made with the dark lantern. He thought it would be better to follow the fashion of the other stores; and he lighted three burners, so that he could better find his way about the premises, and to enable him to watch the robbers to advantage. The light revealed to him the fact that the place he held was a large jewelry establishment. At one of the clocks in the front store, he saw that it was half-past three o'clock.

When he had satisfied himself on these points, he thought he heard the robbers talking together. He returned to the rear of the store, and found that two of the burglars had worked themselves together, and lay back to back, so that each could use his hands upon the bands of the other. One had made some progress in untying the rope that bound together the hands of the other.

“That’s the game you are up to,” said he, as he seized one of them by the collar, and dragged him to the other side of the store.

“See here, my lad, you are meddling with what don’t concern you,” said this man. “When the people come to the store in the morning, they will accuse you of being one of us.”

“Just my luck!” exclaimed Wade Brooks.

“You can do better, if you will let us loose. I will give you a thousand dollars on the spot, and a share of the swag,” continued the burglar.

“No, I thank you. I would rather be honest than make a thousand dollars at your trade. That’s the sort of fellow I am,” said Wade.

At this moment he heard a heavy knocking at the rear door. He at once concluded that this was some trick of the burglars’ accomplices outside, to gain admittance; and he prepared himself accordingly. He did not believe anybody could get ahead of him this time.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HOW IT WAS IN THE MORNING.

“WHO’S there, and what do you want?” demanded Wade, in reply to the summons at the door.

“Open the door,” said a man on the outside.

“Not much!” replied the custodian of the fortress.

“Open the door: I am the private watchman,” added the outsider.

“If you are, you ought to have been around here about half an hour ago,” answered Wade, who did not even know what a private watchman was.

“That’s Bleeker, the private watchman,” interposed the clerk.

“I don’t care who it is: I won’t let any one in till morning. How do I know he is not the man who fired the pistol in the street?” argued Wade. “Besides, I don’t feel much like following your advice, after the way you have managed this business.”

The private watchman, if it was he, rapped at the door till he was tired of it, and then he went off. Wade went his round again, and examined all his

prisoners very carefully. He had them still, and they were all right. The last one visited was the clerk.

“Won’t you let me off, my good fellow?” said this one, in a pleading tone.

“No, I won’t: you let these robbers in, and you tried to shoot me,” answered Wade decidedly.

“I didn’t mean to shoot you. I have a mother who depends on me to support her; and I don’t know what will become of her.”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” added Wade; “but you ought to have thought of that before now.”

A little later, the knocking at the back-door was renewed; and again the private watchman — at any rate, it was the same voice — demanded admittance. Wade made no reply. Then he heard the voices of two other men, who said they were policemen.

“I won’t open the door to any one,” said Wade then. “The store has been broken into, and the robbers have friends on the outside; and I can’t tell the difference between you and them by the sound of your voices.”

“Who are you?” asked one of the men outside.

“I am the fellow that is holding the fort,” answered Wade.

“The police here want to come in,” added the private watchman.

“They can’t come in.”

“Then we will break in the door,” added another.

“If you do, I’ll empty this pistol into you,” re-

plied Wade. "If you want to do any thing about it, go and call the man that keeps the store."

"Where is the man that sleeps in the store?" asked the private watchman.

"He is safe enough, tied hand and foot, so that his business is such he can't leave."

Wade heard the men talking together, and he was pretty well satisfied that they were what they represented themselves to be; but, as he was not sure, he deemed it best not to let them in. It was time to make his round among the prisoners, and he set about it. He let the light of the lantern fall upon each, for the gas did not burn very brightly.

When he came to the one who had proposed to buy out his interest in the scrape, he renewed his offer. Wade thought the voice sounded like one he had heard before; and he threw the light on his face.

"I thought so!" exclaimed he. "You don't seem to be in the missionary business just now."

It was Mr. Caleb Klucker.

"I see you know me," said the swindler; "but I am willing to give you a chance to make a pile of money."

"And I am willing to give you a chance to spend the next ten or twenty years of your life in the State Prison," replied Wade. "I am sure we can't make a trade on any other terms."

Wade left him. By this time the daylight was beginning to come in at the great windows on Broadway. It was nearly an hour by the clock since he

had had his last talk at the back-door with the private watchman. The holder of the fortress seated himself in the rear of the store, and waited patiently for some one to come to his relief. He began to feel hungry too; and this reminded him that he had had no supper. He wondered whether he would be charged with being concerned in the robbery.

He had promised to go back to the restaurant of Mr. Flinker in the morning; but he had little hope of ever seeing the hundred dollars he had lost. Perhaps the jolly old man that kept the eating-house might give him some breakfast; and that was all he had to hope for. While he was thinking in this way, he heard noises at the front door: some one was at work on the locks, and presently the door opened.

A well-dressed gentleman and three other men entered at the Broadway door, and two of them were policemen. The person at the head of the procession was evidently the one that kept the store; and the man with the policemen was doubtless the private watchman. As they came in, Wade Brooks rose to show himself.

"Who are you?" demanded the gentleman at the head of the procession.

"I am the fellow that is keeping this store at present," replied Wade.

"Are you one of those that broke into the store?"

"No, sir! I found the door open, and I came in."

"What has been going on here?" continued the proprietor, gazing sternly at Wade as though he considered him an intruder.

“Well, sir, there has been an awful time here,” answered Wade, shaking his head to emphasize the statement.

“Has the store been robbed?”

“That’s more than I know; but I think the fellows that took the job didn’t get away with any thing.”

Mr. Maynard, the proprietor, led the way toward the rear of the store, looking about on both sides of him, evidently anxious to learn the present condition of the establishment. Presently he came to the bag of goods which Wade had dragged in from the back street.

“What’s this?” he asked.

“I don’t know what’s in it; but I brought it into the store from that street,” replied Wade, pointing to the one in the rear.

Mr. Maynard opened the bag, and found it was filled with watches, chains, and jewelry. He looked about in the vicinity of the counters and the big iron safe, and found two other bags, both containing the same kind of goods as the first. Wade had not seen these, for he had not been behind the counters.

“Where did you find that bag?” demanded Mr. Maynard.

“I brought it in from the back street; but I haven’t seen these two bags till now,” replied Wade.

“The store has been robbed!” exclaimed the proprietor with a good deal of excitement. “Where is Steeples?”

“Steeple? I don’t know him,” said Wade.

“He is the clerk that sleeps in the store,” added Mr. Maynard.

“Oh! I know where he is,” answered the boy custodian of the store. “Come this way, and I will show him to you.”

Wade led the way to the part of the store where he had put the clerk after he had bound him, and, throwing the light of his dark lantern on the face of the recreant employé, enabled the proprietor to recognize him at a glance.

“Steeple!” exclaimed Mr. Maynard, as he gazed upon the clerk he had so lately trusted with all the property in the store. “How is this?”

But Steeple made no reply to the question, and closed his eyes as though he could not bear the sight of his employer.

“This way, if you please, sir, and I will show you something that is worth seeing,” said Wade, as he led the way to the nearest of the robbers. “That is one of the fellows that did it.”

“We know him; but I didn’t think he was up to a job as big as this one,” said the officer of the police, who was one of the party.

“Here is another one, sir,” added Wade, leading the proprietor to the other side of the store. “This is Caleb Klucker.”

“Who?” asked the officer; and he probably knew the man better than the boy from the country.

“His name is Caleb Klucker; and he swindled me out of eighteen dollars.”

“This is Crapsy: he is a sneak-thief and general confidence man,” added the police-officer. “But he has as many names as he has fingers and toes.”

“But why is Steeples tied up with the rest of them?” asked Mr. Maynard, looking towards the place where the clerk lay on the floor.

“Because he fired a pistol at me, and tried to kill me; and he did it when the robber on the other side of the store told him to do it,” replied Wade.

“But he thought you were one of the robbers,” suggested the owner of the property.

“No, he didn’t; for he knows that when I found him gagged, and tied to a post, I let him loose; and he knew that I had knocked over these two robbers without any help from him. He knew I was not one of the thieves; and he would not have fired at me if he had known I was one of the thieves.”

“You knocked the robbers over!” exclaimed the officer of the police, with something like a laugh, in which his companions joined.

“That’s my remembrance of the matter,” added Wade.

“Do you mean to say that you, a mere boy, knocked over these two men, one of whom is an accomplished cracksman, and bound them as we find them?” demanded the officer, with an incredulous chuckle.

“That’s just what I mean to say,” replied Wade stoutly.

“Won’t you tell how it was done?” laughed the police-officer. “We have had some experience with the thieves of New York.”

“So have I,” added Wade, as he led the way to the back door.

He turned the key, and threw back the bolts. Opening the door, he related the story as it has already been told. The police were satisfied that the feat was possible in the way it was described. The officer then examined the broken heads of the discomfited robbers, and found plain marks of the heels of the boy’s shoes on both of them. The “one from the country” recited all the details of the affair with the utmost minuteness. Mr. Maynard and the officer questioned him very closely; and they had no alternative but to believe him, because all the circumstances confirmed what he said. Wade pointed to the box of tools on the floor of the store.

“Those are kept down stairs, and no one is allowed to leave them in the upper store,” said the owner. “Were those used in opening the door?”

“Not at all, sir: Steeples opened the door for the robbers. I found the key of the door on the floor; but they could not have got the door open if those two big bolts had not been shoved back for them,” continued Wade. “That box of tools was brought up here to fix the door, and make it look as if it had been cut away. Then Steeples let them gag and bind him, and he groaned like a sick man, so as to make him self appear all right; and he was to get a share of the swag, as that fellow calls it.”

“My partners have said lately that Steeples was living too fast for his means,” said Mr. Maynard, musing.

“The boy has the right of it: the robbery could have been carried out on no other plan,” added one of the officers.

Not a little to the astonishment of Wade Brooks, he found he was not to be accused as one of the robbers. But it was *not* “just his luck.”

CHAPTER XL.

GATHERING UP THE SWINDLERS.

LATER in the morning the partners and clerks of the store came. A thorough examination of the establishment was made, and it was found that none of the goods had been carried away. Some of the watches in the bag which had been conveyed to the street were somewhat injured, probably by the descent of Wade upon the robber, who was at work on the bag at the time; but a few hundred dollars would repair all the damage. The two robbers and Steeples had been ironed and taken away by the police, who came back as soon as they had committed their prisoners, to continue the examination.

Wade Brooks was questioned by Mr. Maynard and his partners till he was exhausted from the want of food and sleep. The excitement had subsided, and he felt the effect of his long vigil. He began to feel faint and sick.

"I can't say any thing more," replied he, sinking into a chair in the private office of Mr. Maynard.

"Why, what is the matter, my lad?" asked the senior partner of the firm, who saw that the brave boy was pale and faint.

“I am about used up,” said Wade wearily. “I haven’t had any thing to eat since yesterday noon, and I didn’t sleep more than two or three hours in that box last night; and I worked hard from the time I got up till you came in the morning. I had to watch those fellows all the time, for once one of them nearly got loose.”

“It was very thoughtless of me not to think that we were keeping you till after ten o’clock in the morning without your breakfast,” said Mr. Maynard, hastily seizing his hat.

“I shouldn’t mind it if I had had any supper last night,” added Wade, trying to laugh.

“I shall not forgive myself for not thinking of your wants. Now come with me, and we will make it right as soon as possible,” said the senior.

Mr. Maynard conducted him to Delmonico’s, where he ordered the best that could be had even at that famous place, and three times as much as the famished boy could eat. The wealthy jeweller watched him with genuine interest, as he consumed his beef-steak and potatoes and omelet; and Wade came to himself before he had half finished the meal.

“I have to go down to Flinker’s restaurant some time this forenoon,” said Wade, when he began to feel like himself. “A man robbed me of a hundred dollars yesterday; and it was every cent of money I had in the world.”

Mr. Maynard wanted to know about it; and Wade told his story from the hour he had left Midhampton

down to the time he had made his bed in the boxes in the rear of the store. The jeweller was interested; and Wade gave all the names, keeping back nothing. He was musing all the time upon the story to which he was listening, or something else.

“I have had a hard time of it since I came to New York, and I don’t think I am equal to these swindlers you have here. They clean me out every time.”

“An officer of the police shall go with you, to the restaurant and the employment office, and see what can be done; but I don’t think you will ever see your money again,” added Mr. Maynard.

“I don’t like to have to sleep in boxes and barrels in the street; and I shouldn’t have to if I could get something to do. I am willing to work, and do hard work too.”

“Don’t trouble yourself any more about that matter, for I shall see that you have a place,” added Mr. Maynard, in the kindest of tones.

“Thank you, sir: I shall be very glad to get a place on the smallest wages; and I will do my best for the man that hires me.”

When they returned to the store, the senior called the officer of police, who was still about the premises, looking up the facts in the case, and told him of Wade’s experience in the employment office.

“Now, Barnett, I want you to go with the young man, and do what you can to set him right,” said Mr. Maynard.

“It is a hard case to find these fellows,” said the officer; “but I will do the best I can.”

Mr. Barnett and Wade left the private office together. They walked along by the counter for some distance, where customers were looking at the goods. Suddenly Wade pulled the coat of the officer, and turned square around, evidently so that somebody should not see his face.

“What’s the matter?” asked the policeman.

“Do you see the man that is looking into the glass case?” added Wade greatly excited, — “the man in a frock coat?”

“I see him.”

“That is Mr. Flinker!”

“Do you mean that he is the one who keeps the restaurant?”

“He is the one that pretended to keep it.”

“Are you very sure?” inquired the careful officer.

“He has changed his clothes, and is fixed up more than he was yesterday; but I know he is the one.”

Mr. Barnett had so much confidence in the boy, that he immediately arrested the man, and, in spite of his energetic protest, put the handcuffs upon him. He was looking at some gold rings when he was taken; and Wade concluded that he was spending his money upon these trinkets.

“You are utterly mistaken in your man, Mr. Officer,” said Mr. Flinker.

“If you will give me your name and residence, I will try to find out the truth of what you say,” replied Mr. Barnett.

“I live in Buffalo,” added the thief.

“Street and number ; and I will telegraph to the police of Buffalo,” said the business-like officer.

“I don’t care to frighten my family with any inquiries of the sort you propose,” replied Mr. Flinker, who evidently did not like the plan mentioned.

“Very well, Mr. Flinker: I can tell whether or not you are the man I want, without disturbing your family in Buffalo,” added Mr. Barnett.

He called a carriage ; and the trio drove to the restaurant.

“You think the real Mr. Flinker will know this gentleman, don’t you, Wade ?” asked the officer.

“I am sure he will ; for he was talking with him for some time,” answered Wade.

And so it proved. The old gentleman was confident he was the man who had come in with the boy the day before ; and he was willing to swear to his identity.

“But where have you been all the morning, my lad ?” asked the genuine Mr. Flinker. “The officer who was to look up your case waited two hours for you ; and then we concluded that you were a fraud, and that you had been making fools of us all.”

“He has been well employed ; and he is no fraud,” interposed Mr. Barnett. “In my opinion, he is the smartest boy in New York City.”

“Is that so ?” exclaimed the elder Mr. Flinker. “If that is the case, I don’t know but I can find something for him to do. He wanted to get a place.”

“I think he will get a better place than you will be able to give him,” added the officer.

“I can’t give him ten dollars a week, and his board ; but I will give him a job, and pay him all he is worth to me.”

“I am much obliged to you, Mr. Flinker ; and, if I find I want a place, I will come down and hire out with you,” added Wade, who was certainly very grateful for the offer.

“I think he will get his ten dollars a week,” said Mr. Barnett. “Now we will try to find the employment office. You have no idea where it is, you say.”

“I only know that it is farther from Broadway than this place is, and it is over this way,” replied Wade, pointing in the direction he had come the day before.

“Perhaps you can tell us where it is, Mr. Flinker,” said the officer, turning to his prisoner.

“I know nothing at all about it. You have got hold of the wrong man, and you will find it so,” replied the swindler.

“When I do, I will let you know,” laughed Mr. Barnett. “Never mind, Wade : I know where the place is, from your description.”

This proved to be the case ; for he conducted his party to the employment office which Wade had visited the preceding day. But the oily-tongued fellow who had been in attendance was not there. One with all his qualifications was behind the

counter, however; and the officer opened upon him at once. He knew of no such man as Wade described. He was the keeper of the office, and he had no person in his employ.

“It must have been some other place,” suggested the man behind the counter.

Wade was willing to make oath that this was the right place. At this point in the interview, two officers on this beat, who had been told by the captain to come to the office, made their appearance. They insisted that the office was a swindling-shop, and they had looked it up. They knew the other man, and were sure they could find him in the course of a day or two. The man in charge and Mr. Flinker were arrested, and sent to the Tombs.

The next day the other man was discovered, and the trio were tried for the swindle, and sent to Sing Sing for a term of years. On Mr. Flinker was found a roll of bills, which on counting them contained one hundred dollars. They were on the Walnut National Bank, and Wade was sure they were the ones taken from him. They were given back to him, and the boy from the country was rich again. Wade proved to be a good witness in this case and in the one against the robbers of the jewelry-store. There were plenty of witnesses to confirm about all his statements; and he stood the test of the lawyers that defended the burglars very well indeed, for he told the truth, and only the truth, hit where it might.

After the arrest of the employment swindlers,

Wade went back to the store of Maynard & Co. As the poor boy went into the private office, it was plain enough to all that he was used up. The excitement had been tremendous. He gaped fearfully.

“I see, my lad, that you are tired out and very sleepy,” said the senior partner. “Come with me, and I will try to do something for you.”

Wade followed him out into the store. The ceiling was at least eighteen feet from the floor. On one side, beginning in the middle and extending to the rear, was a kind of gallery, ten feet above the floor. Part of this was partitioned off so as to contain rooms used for various purposes. Wade followed Mr. Maynard up a flight of stairs that led to this gallery. In the rear, which was lighted by windows opening into the back street, were several work-shops for the repair of articles of jewelry. Passing through these, they came to a room which was fitted up as a sleeping-apartment. It contained two beds; and every thing about it was almost as nice as the upper chambers of the hotel Wade had visited.

“This was John Steeples’s room,” said Mr. Maynard. “Another clerk used to sleep in the other bed; but he has been sick for the last week. You can go to bed here, and sleep till you are rested. If you do not wake, I will have you called about six o’clock.”

Mr. Maynard left him, and Wade was soon in bed and fast asleep. He hardly noticed the apartment, he was so tired.

At the time stated, Mr. Maynard called him. The store had been closed, and most of the clerks had left; but the partners were all there. Wade was conducted to the private office, where the firm were assembled. Wade wondered "what was up."

CHAPTER XLI.

THE TURNING OF THE TIDE.

“WADE,” said Mr. Maynard, “I have made some arrangements for the present, which I hope will be satisfactory to you.”

“Any thing you do will suit me, sir,” replied Wade, wondering what was coming.

“Here is the pistol which I provided for the use of John Steeples. I want you to sleep in his room with another man to-night, and till we can make other plans for the future. I will go with you now to a place where you can take all your meals at our expense.”

“Thank you, sir; but now I have got my money back, I am able to take care of myself. All I want is a place to work,” said Wade, who felt as independent as a basket of chips, now that he was rich.

“You shall have a place to work in a few days: you may depend upon that,” added Mr. Maynard.

“I can go to the restaurant, where Mr. Flinker said he would give me a job of some kind, I don’t know what.”

“We can give you better work and better pay than

any restaurant in the city," continued Mr. Maynard. "Don't think any thing more about Mr. Flinker."

"I am willing to do any kind of work; and I have been used to hard labor for the last year, and to poor living and very little of it. I don't expect to live in the parlor," added Wade.

"Wade, your conduct, including your modesty, pleases us very much; for you don't seem to think that you have done a great service to us," said Mr. Maynard; and the other partners could not help laughing at the simplicity of the boy.

"I only did what I thought was right," replied Wade, fixing his gaze upon the floor. "When I saw those fellows bringing stuff out of the store in the middle of the night, I knew enough to see that it wasn't the thing to do, if I was not brought up in New York."

"You did the right thing. Now, have you any idea what the goods the robbers had packed up to take away with them were worth?"

"No, sir, I have not; but I shouldn't wonder if they would foot up to a thousand dollars, because watches and such things as you keep here count up pretty fast," added Wade.

"We don't know what they were worth exactly, but it would be more, rather than less, than twenty thousand dollars."

"Creation!" exclaimed Wade, astounded at these figures.

"Now I will show you where you are to get your meals," continued the senior partner.

Wade followed him to a hotel in the neighborhood, where the jeweller had made arrangements for him. He had a nice supper, and then returned to the store, where he was admitted by one of the partners, and introduced to his room-mate. The latter was one of the clerks; and, though he could not wholly conceal his contempt for his companion's greenness, he treated him very well. No attempt to break into the store was made that night, and Wade slept like a rock till daylight in the morning.

For several days the boy from the country took his meals at the restaurant, slept in the gallery-chamber, and did such work about the store as he could find to do. Some of the clerks were disposed to make fun of him because he was not fashionably dressed; but Wade took no notice of them. He was kind and obliging to all; and, in spite of his verdancy, all in the store began to like him.

He was willing to work, and anxious to do so; and all that troubled him was, that he had so little to do. He kept his ears and eyes wide open, and he soon began to learn something about the business. When he could find nothing else to do, he studied the map of the city, which he found in the store, so as to learn all about the streets; for he found he was often sent upon errands, and required to deliver goods. He seldom saw Mr. Maynard; but the junior partners told him what to do, and gave him all the good advice he needed.

When he had been in the store a week, Mr. May-

nard sent for him, and he presented himself in the private office. The senior partner looked very good-natured, and saluted him very kindly. Wade wondered that nothing more had been said to him about the kind of work he was to do, for he had been doing nothing but odd jobs up to this time. He felt now that he was to have some kind of a position in the establishment, and that he would have his particular duties assigned to him.

“Wade, I have been to Midhampton three times since I spoke to you last; and I have seen Capt. Singleton of the cutter,” said Mr. Maynard. “I have inquired into your character of all persons I could find who knew any thing about you.”

“I suppose Obed Swikes didn’t speak very well of me,” added Wade.

“He did not; but everybody else did. I had a long talk with Capt. Trustleton about you, and we went over all the events that occurred before and at the time of your leaving Midhampton. He was confident that you were an honest and truthful boy: he was sure you had a good deal of real grit. I saw your teachers in the day and Sunday school, and their testimony was all in your favor. In a word, Wade, I am entirely satisfied with you. What Swikes says against you, under the circumstances, is rather in your favor than otherwise.”

“I had to bear all the blame, while I was at his house, for whatever his son Matt did that was out of the way. Matt was a bad boy,” said Wade.

“So I ascertained. Swikes wants to get you back; but I went to the authorities of the town, and they say he has no claim upon you.”

“I always said that when I was accused of running away from him. They said I belonged in the poor-house; and I would rather have gone there, if it hadn't been for the name of the thing.”

“I have a paper from the overseers of the poor of the town, binding you over to me until you are of age,” added Mr. Maynard.

“I like that first-rate; and I begin to feel as though I belonged somewhere now,” replied Wade, with a cheerful smile.

“You belong to me for the present; but if you do not like the arrangement, after you have tried it a while, I shall be glad to release you from the contract,” added Mr. Maynard. “Now I am going to tell you what I mean to do with you. We all feel an interest in you, and desire to make the best of you that we can. It is not altogether because you have saved a large amount of our property, but because we think you will become a useful young man to us.”

“I shall try to do the best I can,” said the grateful boy.

“Now let me tell you that Steeples was a poor boy like yourself. He did very well for several years; but at last he got above his business. He had ten dollars a week, but that was not enough to support him and his mother; but she was the suf-

ferer, rather than himself. He began to live too fast; and now we find that he has not been honest for the last year, for we have been looking over his affairs since the robbery. We point him out as an example for you to shun.”

“I don’t think I could ever let the robbers into the store, as he did,” said Wade.

“Probably he did not think so when he first got his place. He was considered a very good boy, or we should not have trusted him as we did. We shall give you ten dollars a week, and pay your board.”

“That’s very liberal, as I have no mother to support,” replied Wade, delighted with the prospect thus held out to him, for his dream of riches was fully realized in this plan. “But what am I to do?”

“In the first place, you are to sleep in the store with Ranlet, when he gets well. We close the establishment at six, and open it at eight. Between ten and six, one of you must walk about the store all the time. This will be eight hours, or four for each of you; and you and Ranlet can divide the time as you please: only, when you have made the plan, let me know what it is. To make up for this night service, you will not be asked to do any thing after one o’clock, or before nine o’clock in the morning. One of you may be out of the store till ten every evening.”

“What am I to do in the forenoon, sir?” asked Wade.

“At first you will carry bundles, assist in packing goods, and make yourself generally useful,” replied Mr. Maynard. “During the holidays, and at other times when we are very busy, we shall expect you to do all you can without regard to hours, though you will have plenty of time to eat and sleep. Let me say, Wade, that you must put on better clothes than you wear now, and, if you desire it, one of us will go with you to the tailor’s, and we shall present to you your first suit,” added Mr. Maynard, with a smile, as he surveyed the primitive garments of the “one from the country.”

Wade accepted this kind offer; and in a few days he was as fashionably dressed as the rest of the employés in the store. In another week Ranlet was able to return to his duty, and he and Wade divided the time between them. As his room-mate had friends in the city, it was agreed that he should be out every evening till ten, while Wade was to sleep from six till two. This was eight hours for him, and all he needed. Ranlet was to sleep from two in the morning till eight, and take his nap in the afternoon if he wanted it. Mr. Maynard thought it was about an even thing, and approved the plan.

Then Wade found he had all the afternoon on his hands: and for a few days he preferred to work during these hours, rather than “loaf,” but Mr. Maynard suggested that he could go to school at one of the mercantile academies, and fit himself for business. He took this advice, and was wholly devoted to his studies.

In October he was allowed a week's vacation; and he spent it in a visit to Midhampton. Even a month of absence had made a wonderful change in his appearance and manners; and his old friends hardly knew him. He found that Capt. Trustleton had sent his son to a boarding-school of the strictest sort, where he had to eat and sleep with his teachers, and had no time at all to "cut up."

Wade went to see Obed Swikes's folks; but they were not very glad to see him. The old lady told him he looked like a dandy, and she supposed he was as "stuck up as any of the rest of them city fellers." Obed thought, as he had plenty of money now, he had better pay for his board for the time he was in the family; but Wade "couldn't see it."

Matt had a terrible sore head since he got back from his excursion to New York and out to sea. His father had talked a great deal with Capt. Trustleton about him and Lon. They had been partly spoiled, both of them, by being humored too much. The captain spoke favorably of the boarding-school to which he intended to send his own son; but Obed was too mean to pay the bills, and he thought he could "knock the nonsense out of Matt" by putting him down to hard work. And he did do it. Since Matt had stolen his money, the old man's eyes were opened. It was hard times with Matt just now; and, if he could have got hold of any money, he would have lost no time in running away again. But Obed kept his money in the bank after it had been stolen twice.

Wade Brooks is now one of the best salesmen in the store of Maynard & Co.; and he knows that part of the business as well as the partners. He has followed up his studies so closely that he is a well-educated man. He is only twenty-two; and there is no doubt that he will soon be one of the partners of the firm. He has been relieved of the duty of sleeping in the store; and though he was "one from the country," and noted in the beginning for his verdancy, he is now an elegant and accomplished gentleman; and rumor has it that Mr. Maynard's youngest daughter is not wholly indifferent to him.

Our story is finished. Wade Brooks has come out of all his troubles. He has been faithful to his employers; he has improved his mind; and he has studied to make himself perfect in the knowledge of his business. After his courage and skill had procured him a good situation, the turning of the tide came to him; and since that time, when things good, pleasant, and profitable come to him, it is "Just his Luck."

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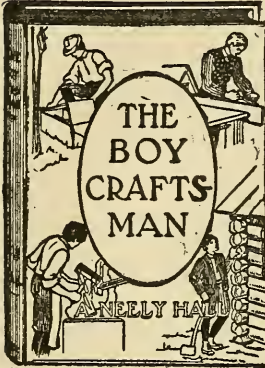
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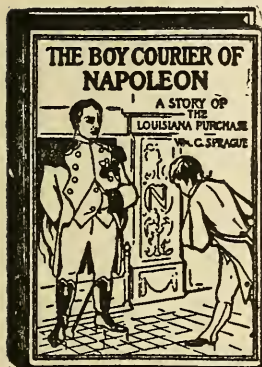
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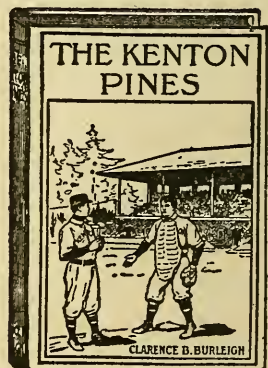
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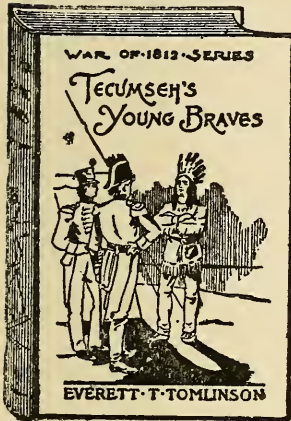
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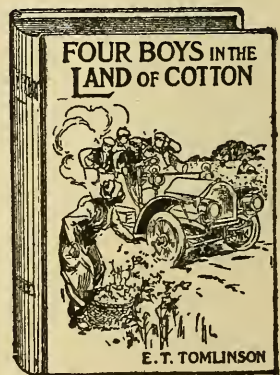
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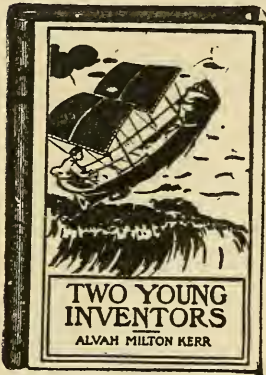


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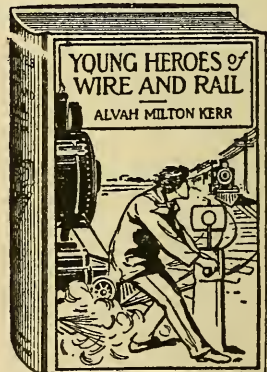
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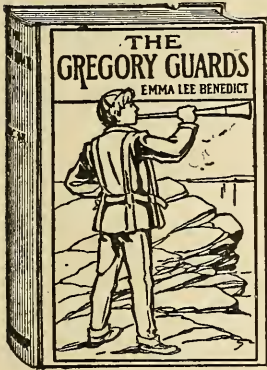
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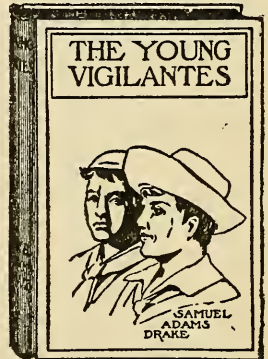
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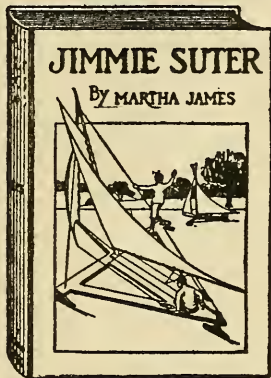
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